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THE METAL WILL LIVE ON



AS A HUGE rhythm-action fan, I'm in my element right now. *Rock Band* has returned, meaning I can welcome back an archive of amazing DLC tunes I bought back

in the day and while I'm a little disappointed that *RB4* turned out to be a bit light on content, there are few developers I trust more than Harmonix – if the team says features like online play and Practice mode could still be added down the line, I'm inclined to believe them.

I've not just been dusting off my old gear, either – I've actually *added* to my mountain of plastic instruments by picking up the new *Guitar Hero* controller and I'm loving the fact that the new button layout presents a fresh challenge. Not since *DJ Hero* have I had to drop below Expert to get my head around new inputs and even though I'm back on Expert already (I play guitar, so chord shapes make sense to me), the tougher songs still present enough new shapes and patterns to keep me on my toes.

But let's not see a repeat of last time, eh? Harmonix has stated that it intends for *RB4* to be the sole platform for the series, improved and added to over time rather than replaced by sequels – it's a much better model, frankly, and one I think we'll come to see a lot more games adopt. But what about *Guitar Hero*? If *Live* does well, will Activision be able to resist reaching for Freestyle's udders and getting a sequel ready for this time next year? I sure as hell hope so – GHTV already stands as a solid foundation on which to build and if the team is allowed to focus its attention on this novel streaming system and keep pumping it full of sweet new content, I reckon it'd make more money through its monetisation than by going down the sequel route again. That's what killed my favourite genre last generation, and I'll be damned if I'm gonna sit back and watch that happen again...

Enjoy the issue, and I'll see ya online.

LUKE ALBIGÉS

EDITOR
@LukemonMGJ
PSN: PorthMinster

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06

DARK SOULS III

Miyazaki on the making the best *Dark Souls* yet

PLAY⁴ Contents

“What is bravery, without a dash of recklessness?”

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Adam Jensen is evolving...



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WE FOUGHT THE LORE (AND THE LORE WON)

How From Software turned failure into education, and why Dark Souls III is the studio's most important game yet

Where hand-holding and clear, linear experiences are the modern standard, From Software has made a name for itself by stabbing this trend in the back. Pleasingly, its unique blend of brutally tough action-RPG bleakness has carved a niche for itself with players who don't just want to go to waypoints or follow a man, but now the team faces a new challenge. We're three *Souls* games (and *Bloodborne*) in now and although new enemies and settings force us to adapt a little, skilled players still go into a new *Souls* game with the advantage of experience – if the series is to retain its standing as one of the toughest out there, these players need to be tested in entirely new ways. But how can a game possibly hope to challenge those veterans without raising the bar too high for newcomers to get over at all?

Director Hidetaka Miyazaki helps shed light on this. "The key concept of this series is 'feeling accomplishment through overcoming difficulty' so there's no option to simply lower the difficulty – but I don't want to make this game almost impossible to clear either," he muses. "Our objective is making the game 'possible to accomplish'." That's actually a *more* terrifying way of putting it than simply calling it 'impossible' – surviving falling out of a plane is 'possible to accomplish', but we'd rather not give it a go. "I want to keep both the possibility of accomplishment and the difficulty itself," he continues. "Therefore, for example, adding observation, planning or learning to the basic difficulty situation adds to the importance of 'non-skill' elements."



GO HARD OR GO HOME

Miyazaki on the art of creating challenging games

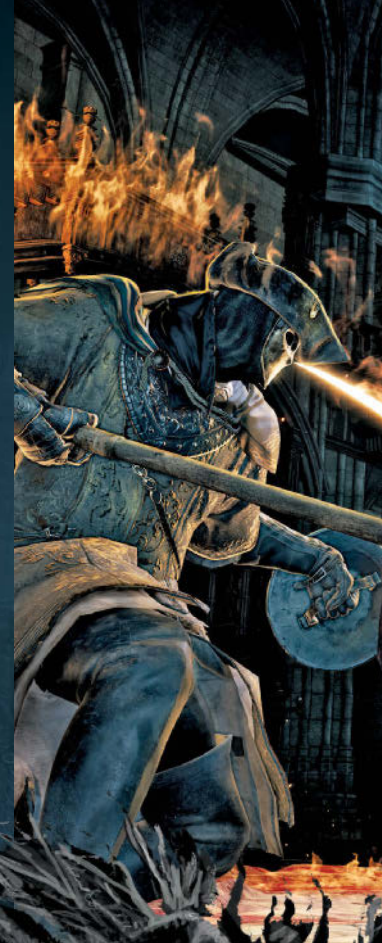


"First of all, we decide the difficulty. The difficulty exists only to feel a sense of accomplishment, so it must be overcome and not be unreasonable. The concept of instant death and challenging combat is important, but we don't put too much stress on preventing the operability or actions of the player, so the difficulty is adjusted by those matters. After that, the standard value of the difficulty is decided. How many attacks are needed to kill or be killed by an enemy? What about if the player is armoured? At the same time, concepts or the characteristics for each enemy are discussed, so we adjust the value again to make them matched. Then, we move on to play test and further adjustment, but the steps don't always go to plan."

New mechanics can also help keep players on their toes, and beginners and experts alike start on the same level here. "*Dark Souls III* has Skills or other new elements to overcome these situations," Miyazaki says, referring to each weapon's unique abilities. Activated with L2 while two-handing (or indeed dual-wielding – twin katanas now fit into the right hand slot), the effects vary from a buff with the mace, a 'ready' stance with the straight sword that leads to extra piercing attacks and a sweeping area attack with the dual blades. It's likely that these will be shared between weapon families rather than unique to each named piece of equipment but still, that's a whole new factor to consider when picking what weapon works best for you. These drain a 'mana' bar (there's no official name for it yet,

we're told) that is shared with spell uses and which can be topped up with a second Estus Flask, this one of the Ash variety. It's a neat consolidation of several old features into one resource, and this could later be tapped by other abilities and items as well. "I think seasoned players will feel refreshed and enjoy new strategies too," says Miyazaki. "And for the new players, I want to make it difficult, of course, but accomplishable and enjoyable."

That's just as well, since *DSIII* is likely to attract a fair few players who are new to the series – *Bloodborne* did remarkably well and the positive critical reception and word of mouth convinced many players with no *Souls* experience to take a horrible holiday in Yharnam. "I am very happy if





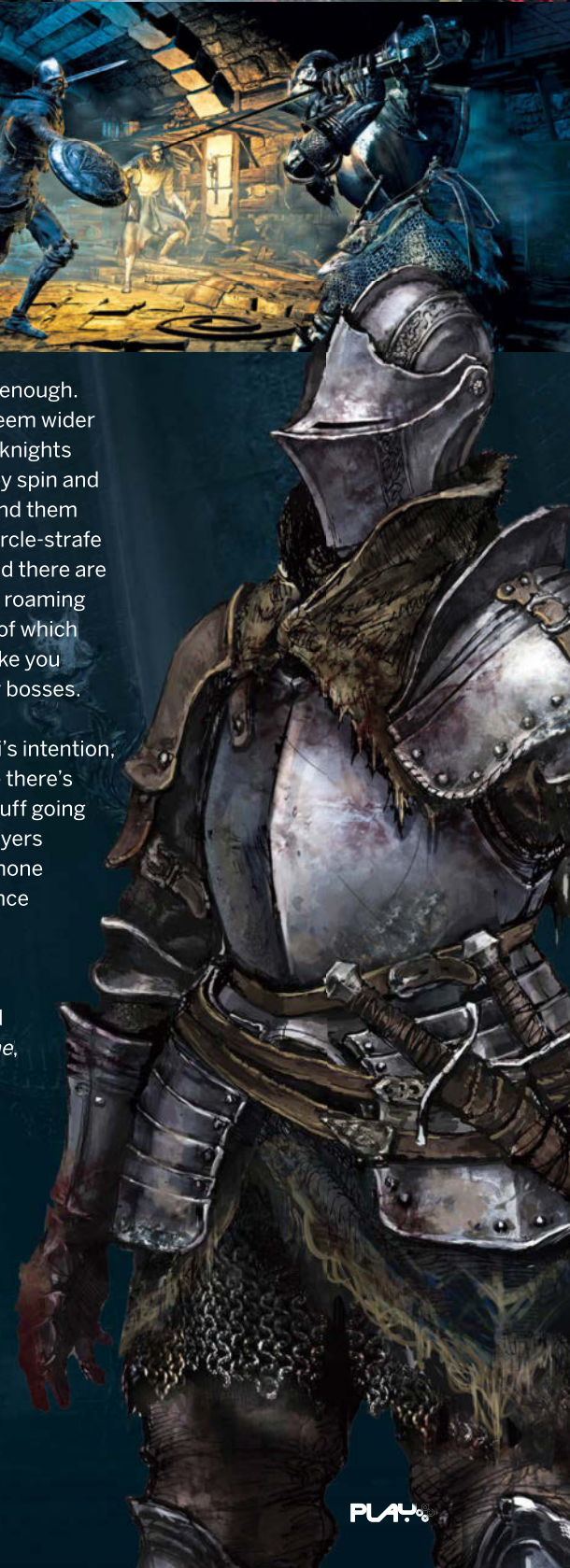
△×△ This is the Dancer Of The Frigid Valley, the main boss in the area we played. She's a right bitch.



those who played *Bloodborne* are interested in *Dark Souls III* too, says Miyazaki. "However, this doesn't mean I would change the approach of the development. I believe that *Dark Souls III* must be developed as its own individual series." There's a little crossover in terms of the general structure and difficulty level but go into *Dark Souls III* trying to play it like *Bloodborne* and you're going to fail horribly. Trust us, we tried. Where *Bloodborne* rewarded aggression, *Dark Souls*, conversely, rewards patience – it's all about picking the right moment to land blows and not getting greedy, something that the regain system actually let you get away with a little bit. It's a habit that quickly gets knocked out of you, mind, especially since enemy placement and types aren't as defined as in previous games. In the area we played, for example, there are scores of zombie-like enemies that aren't hostile unless provoked, but certain enemies can scream when they spot you to rally the entire horde – you either need to kill *everything* as you go, pick off screamers before they can alert the pack or be ready to deal with about ten enemies at once. In another twist, we encountered an enemy who would erupt into a hideous and more powerful

foe if not killed quickly enough. Move sets in general seem wider and more considered (knights have a move where they spin and slam their shields behind them to prevent *DSII*-style circle-strafe abuse, for instance) and there are more deadly creatures roaming the land as well, some of which have the stature to make you believe they're actually bosses.

As was Miyazaki's intention, it does feel like there's enough new stuff going on to test returning players and at the same time, none of it grows the experience in a way that stands to alienate newcomers. But after working on something as enclosed and grim as *Bloodborne*, surely returning to the fantasy universe of the *Souls* series is oddly refreshing? "It has been a long time so I do feel refreshed, as you say," confirms Miyazaki. "Development of *Bloodborne* and sinking into the battle of the hunter and the unique horror world was not only





△○×□ Games don't come much gloomier or more oppressive than *Dark Souls*...



an exciting experience but it also allowed me to re-acknowledge the charm of a fantasy world or and the intrigue of *Dark Souls* for me. It is a rare chance to be given this opportunity and I want to use this fresh insight to benefit the development of *Dark Souls III*." Although there are some clear parallels between *DSIII* and *Bloodborne*, Miyazaki is keen to stress that there isn't really any crossover between the two games in terms of development or approach. "Above all else, *Bloodborne* was a precious experience as it was the first game we developed for the current generation consoles," he explains. "The learnings gained from this

have been used for *Dark Souls III*, which includes trouble-solving."

It's not really all that surprising that the team is looking to downplay *Bloodborne*'s influence on its new game – many elements of *Bloodborne* were simply evolutions of *Souls* staples, after all, so building on these actually has little bearing on or reference to the gothic spin-off. One of the core areas in which we see growth is level design, returning once again to having expansive areas interconnected with shortcuts to make boss runs (you'll likely need a few goes on each) a little more manageable now that enemies



"OUR OBJECTIVE IS MAKING THE GAME POSSIBLE TO ACCOMPLISH"

no longer despawn after killing them enough times. It sounds as though Miyazaki and his team are taking this structure to the extreme this time out, too. "The scale of the map is one of the biggest changes," he tells us. "The map with complicated three-dimensional construction is my favorite, and the scale is increased greatly." And even though fast travel will be available from early in the game, that doesn't mean that you'll be able to skip troublesome areas – it just means that you'll have to be that much more thorough in your search for the series' few safe zones. "Regarding level design, it means that the player has a greater reason to find bonfires in the game," Miyazaki confirms.

Those looking for a slightly easier ride can still summon help in the form of Phantoms, although a shift to having reusable items for both

co-op and invasions across all characters means that you are never safe. We are likely to see this put to good use by the *Dark Souls III*'s Covenant system, although Miyazaki doesn't want to spoil this for players. "I can't talk about the details but the Covenants are this time slightly different compared to the past series," he states. "It will be a chance to explore various new situations in the simple multiplayer of co-op and invasion."

It feels familiar, yet original – easy to grasp while still difficult to truly master. New challenges await even the most hardcore *Souls* veterans, and we couldn't ask for much more than that. "The development of *Dark Souls III* is currently at its height," Miyazaki says in closing. "We are doing our best to deliver an exciting game, which we hope you look forward to."



△○×□ It's so nice to go back to having the safety net of a shield again after *Bloodborne* left us feeling naked.

PREPARE TO DIE

One of the main things you need to know going into a *Souls* game is that you will die. Like, a lot. Fortunately, there are already games that can help prep you for this kind of mental anguish, so here is our expertly curated selection of things to play that will help prepare you for your inevitable failures...



METAL GEAR RISING: REVENGEANCE

Blast through on Normal and then the harder modes to unlock Revengeance difficulty. Here, pretty much everything will be able to one-shot you.



BLOODBORNE

This exclusive wasn't any easier than the core *Souls* games, sure, but it might be worth trying your hand at a New Game+ or challenge (Bloodtinge build, anyone?) run just to keep your skills sharp until *DSIII* invades your life.



LORDS OF THE FALLEN

The difficulty here lies not so much in getting through the game as in tricking your brain into thinking this is anything more than a *Souls* clone. It's okay, but you'll appreciate the real deal more once you've played this pretender.



CATHERINE

A curveball, sure, but hear us out. The later stages of this odd puzzle game demand extreme mental gymnastics – the kind you'll need to beat *DSIII*'s bosses without a trip to the shops to grab a replacement controller, in fact.

THE PHANTOM PAIN

How Dark Souls III's new mechanics affect competitive play

FASHION SOULS

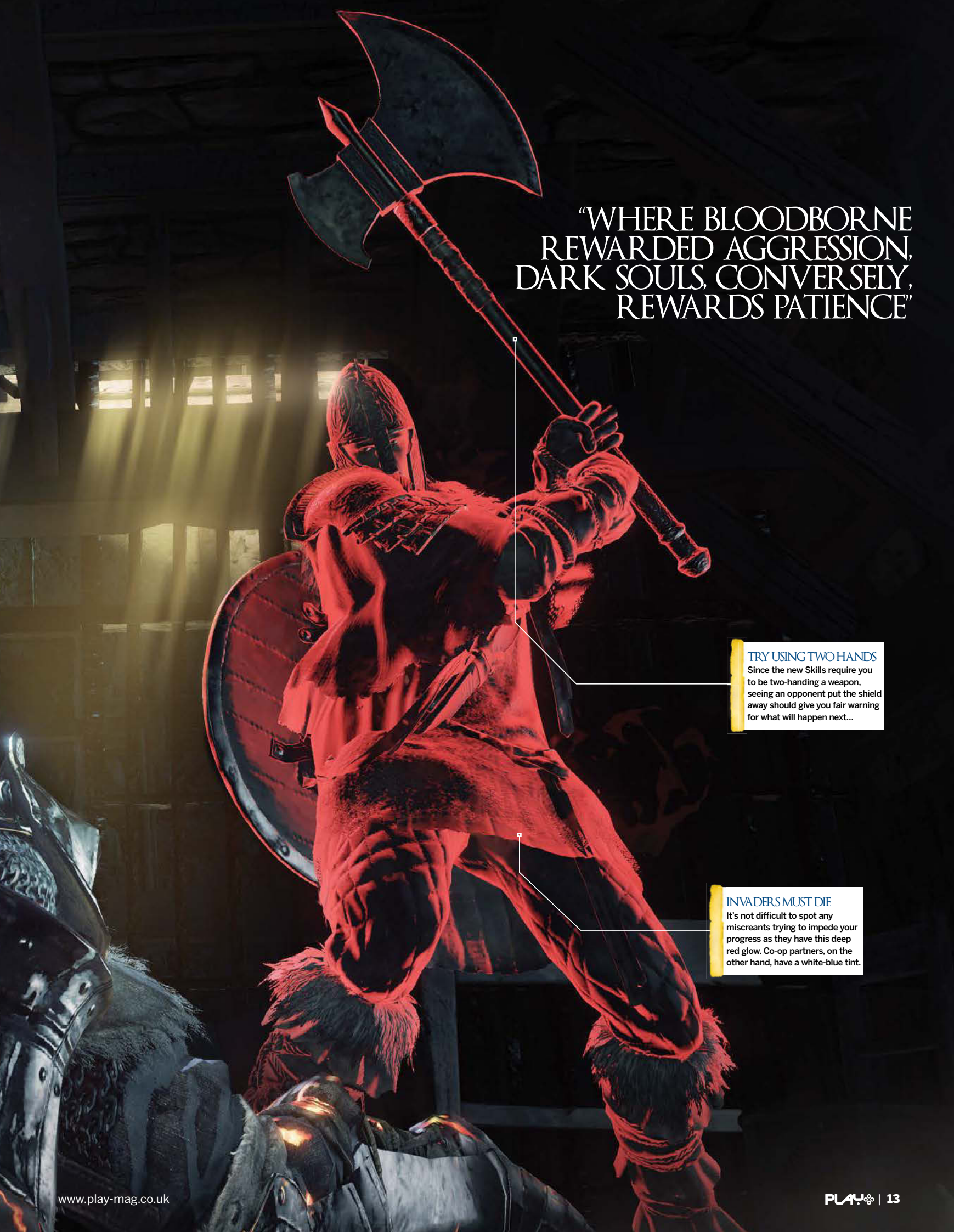
Stats be damned – the best armour you can wear in *Dark Souls* is whatever looks best. Rocking up in low-level gear can intimidate other players, too.

ROLL WITH IT

Although the Agility stat is apparently gone, weight limits will still impact roll speed. If you want to be able to evade invaders with ease, keep your loadout simple.

A DAY TO REMEMBER

While you're the host of a world, using an Ember – a similar consumable to Humanity – gives you a health boost, and most likely enables invasions as well.



“WHERE BLOODBORNE
REWARDED AGGRESSION,
DARK SOULS, CONVERSELY,
REWARDS PATIENCE”

TRY USING TWO HANDS

Since the new Skills require you to be two-handing a weapon, seeing an opponent put the shield away should give you fair warning for what will happen next...

INVADERS MUST DIE

It's not difficult to spot any miscreants trying to impede your progress as they have this deep red glow. Co-op partners, on the other hand, have a white-blue tint.



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

DEUS EX

MANKIND DIVIDED

We delve into the shadowy world of secrets and conspiracy that is the latest entry in a legendary action RPG series

1 IT HAS ALL KICKED OFF

After the end of *Human Revolution*, an event was triggered that sent every augmented human in the world into fight-or-flight mode, causing chaos as they attacked civilians. Fast-forward two years to 2029 and augmented humans are looked at with disgust. It is the conflict that emerges which forms the backdrop for *Mankind Divided*.

2 YOU'RE A DOUBLE AGENT

The protagonist of *Human Revolution*, Adam Jensen, returns in *Mankind Divided*. He works for a coalition that is focused on combating terrorism, which in this world is attributed to Aug-rights organisations. Jensen is suspicious of what is going on behind the scenes, suspecting foul play. Consequently, he is operating as a double agent, working alongside an activist group called the Juggernaut Collective to find out how the Illuminati might be manipulating events.

3 IT'S COMPLICATED

Deus Ex isn't going to simplify the conflict in the game with cheap moralising and it isn't going to make the mistake of equating the violence of the oppressor with that of the oppressed. It's going to be hard to present the story in this way but we're confident Eidos will deliver. With things like prejudice and hacktivism forming key strands of the game's story, there's also potential to reflect on what's going on in the world today.

4 PRAGUE IS STUNNING

The game looks incredible from a visual perspective. What we know so far suggests that the game will primarily be set in Prague. It is full of detail and, more importantly, it looks like its streets are alive with citizens going about their business, lending authenticity to the place. We love the way that the game is blending its cyberpunk style with European architecture, too. Seeing the future layered over the past makes it far more compelling than the generic sci-fi architecture that we usually see.

5 THERE ARE FOUR PILLARS

Eidos Montreal describes *Deus Ex* as having four pillars: combat, stealth, hacking and social. You choose in which of those areas you want to focus your upgrade points and how you want to play the game. You can, for example, focus on upgrading abilities related to stealth and hacking and sneak through without anyone knowing you were there.

6 SWITCH IT UP

You're able to customise your weapons on the fly while you're out in the field in *Deus Ex*. You can attach a silencer, change the sights, the gun's firing pattern, whack on a scope, or switch out the ammo type. EMP ammo, for example, is useful when you're confronted by a camera that you want to take out. It's all done in a really slick way, too – rather than backing out to a menu, Jensen simply raises his gun into view and the customisation options appear on-screen.

7 SOCIALISING IS IMPORTANT

We haven't seen it yet, but Eidos Montreal has said that *Mankind Divided* has a large social hub for you to explore. What will you do there? Well, we presume you'll be able to pick up missions and do a bit of shopping to pick up weapons, attachments and items to aid you in your missions. Social areas were a sparsely populated in *Human Revolution*, but we'd expect that'll change now that Eidos now has the power of the PS4 in its hands.

8 DO IT YOUR WAY

Strongly related to those aforementioned four pillars of gameplay are the abilities that you choose to unlock and upgrade. The cloak and X-ray vision from *Human Revolution* are two abilities that make a return in *Mankind Divided* that are useful to stealth players, for example. As well as there being abilities that are useful to particular playstyles, however, there will also be ones that open up entirely new options. Deciding on what upgrades to take will completely change how you approach the game.



ΔΟΧ Golem City is a ghetto in Prague populated by augmented humans; Jensen should feel right at home here.

9 TASERS GONNA TASE

One of the new augmentations making an appearance in *Mankind Divided* is the stun arm. This one is going to be useful for those of you who like to play games stealthily. The stun arm enables Jensen to lock on to up to four enemies – we imagine it'll start with the ability to target one and that you'll have to upgrade it to target four as you progress through the game – and take them out with electrified darts.

10 IT'S GOT BLINK

The new Icarus Dash looks like an ability that's going to have a major impact on how levels are designed by virtue of the way it allows you to move around. It functions a bit like Blink in *Dishonored* – you aim at where you want to go and then Jensen dashes towards it. You could use this to quickly leap up to another floor to get a better position while in combat, or to avoid fights all together by accessing a route you wouldn't be able to otherwise and bypassing enemy guards.

11 BATTERIES ARE GONE

It looks like Eidos Montreal has revamped the power system that limits how much you use your augmentations. In *Human Revolution* it was based on batteries, which wasn't a great system for a number of reasons we won't go into here, because it looks like they are now irrelevant. It seems that *Mankind Divided* uses a simple power bar. Similarly to *Dishonored*, a small amount of the bar will recharge after a period of time.

12 HACKING 2.0 IS HERE

There are varying opinions of the hacking in *Human Revolution*, but we're fans. We enjoyed the risk/reward element in that everything you captured carried a risk of triggering the defence systems, turning hacking into a race against time. *Mankind Divided* builds on that with Hacking 2.0, which is a fancy way of Eidos Montreal saying that it has added some new elements to make it even more engaging.

13 HACK FROM AFAR

As well as building on the hacking systems introduced in *Human Revolution*, *Mankind Divided* adds the ability to remote hack devices. It is a far quicker and simpler system based upon timing button presses rather than what we saw in the standard hacking in *Human Revolution*. You will be able to use Jensen's remote hacking ability to open up new routes and to disable robots and cameras.

14 PIN ENEMIES TO WALLS

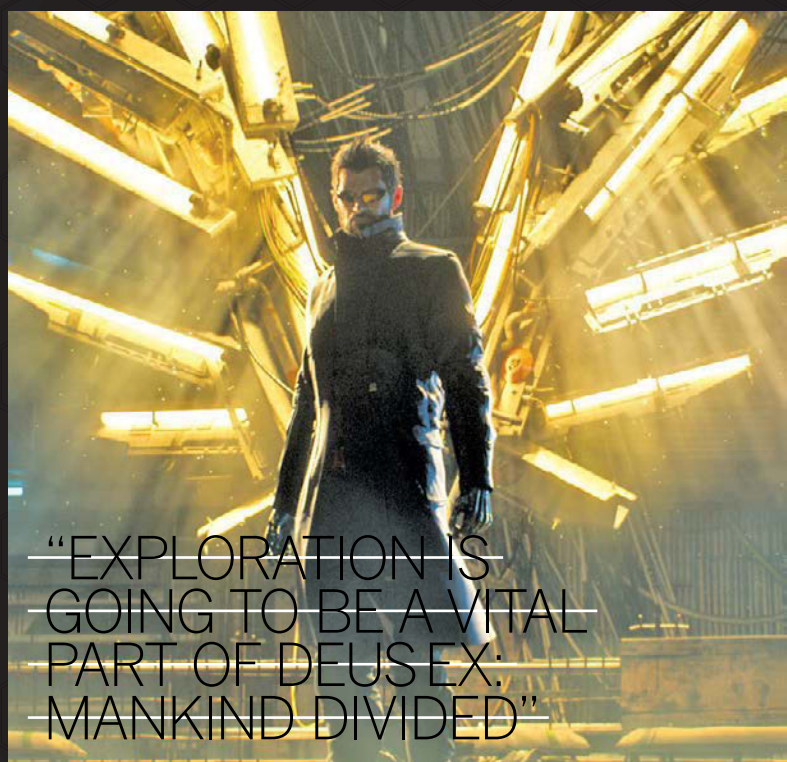
One of the new gadgets set to appear in *Mankind Divided* is the Nanoblade, which is a rather long retractable blade that Jensen can fire from his arms at enemies. The Nanoblade is incredibly powerful, to the point that it can pin Jensen's enemies to walls. It can also, weirdly, be charged as an explosive device, meaning that you can fire it off at enemies who are grouped together in order to take out more than one in a single, explosive, shot.

15 YOU NEED TO EXPLORE

Exploration is going to be a vital part of *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided*. You will find all kinds of opportunities and routes to take by exploring your environment. This could simply mean finding an alternative route. It could mean hacking a computer to find a password that will let you gain access to a security system. It could even mean finding a character that will give you intel that will completely change how you approach a level.

16 COMBAT IS BETTER

Eidos has said that the combat element of *Human Revolution* wasn't on par with the stealth element of the game, and that you were somewhat encouraged to play the game a certain way, which isn't what the developer wanted. As a result of that, it has put effort into making *Mankind Divided* a better shooter. What we've seen suggests it has been successful, but we need to go hands-on to be sure.





CASTING CALL

We pick out some of the game's key players



ADAM JENSEN

After his failed attempt to save the world at the end of *Human Revolution*, Jensen is left bitter and disillusioned. While he works for a counterterrorism unit, his real target is the people responsible for the events of the first game.



VICTOR MARCHENKO

Like Talos Rucker, Marchenko is a member of the Augmented Rights Coalition. Unlike Rucker, however, Marchenko wants to turn the fight against oppression into a much more violent one.



ALEX VEGA

Alex Vega is a principled woman who had to leave her job as a Belltower pilot after helping to expose its illegal drug operation. She now works with the Juggernaut Collective and is aiding Jensen with his investigations.



TALOS RUCKER

Rucker is a political activist and the leader of the Augmented Rights Coalition. He is an advocate of non-violent resistance and wants to find out who is behind the terrorist attacks being attributed to his organisation.



JIM MILLER

Miller is the director of Task Force 29, the unit for which Jensen works at the beginning of the game. He's always been a man that follows orders, but is starting to question some of his superior's decisions.



ELIAS CHIKANE

Chikane is a highly skilled pilot who works with Jensen as part of Task Force 29. He is a rather salty fellow who doesn't particularly like Jensen due to his distrust of augmented people.



17 YOU CAN BE A TANK

Speaking of combat, Eidos Montreal has showed off a new ability that is surely a must for those of you aren't interested in the stealthy option and want to go in all guns blazing. It is called the Titan Shield. We don't know the scientific justification for how it works, but, essentially, it covers Jensen in an opaque shield made of lots of small hexagons (which is, of course, the most *Deus Ex* shape there is) allowing Jensen to absorb a large amount of damage.

18 BOSS FIGHTS ARE FIXED

Unquestionably the worst part of *Human Revolution* were the boss fights. The only option for dealing with them was to go toe-to-toe, which went against the focus on choice in every aspect of game and punished anyone who hadn't upgraded their combat abilities. Eidos Montreal is fixing that in this game by ensuring that you don't *have* to fight bosses if you don't want to; there will be other ways of dealing with them. The game will be far better for that change.

19 IT'S MAX PAYNE

There's yet another exciting new ability in *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided* that's going to be useful to those of you who want to do away with stealth and play the game like a straight-up shooter. The game allows you to enter a Bullet Time mode, called Focus Mode, which is reminiscent of the *Max Payne* games. That slow-motion ability obviously lends itself to taking out lots of bad guys very quickly with some stylish slow-mo shots.

ΔOXD Cameras can now be hacked from a distance thanks to the new remote hacking system.



THE DEUS EX TIMELINE





20 FACTION WARFARE

This is a *Deus Ex* game, so of course there are competing factions with differing objectives and ideologies, all of which will probably be vying for the opportunity to work with you. The factions we know about so far are the Illuminati, an Aug-rights group called the Augmented Rights Coalition, the anti-illuminati Juggernaut Collective, and the counter-terrorist group that Jensen works for.

21 IT WILL SOUND GREAT

The excellent audio director who worked on *Human Revolution*, Steve Szczepkowski, is returning for *Mankind Divided*. "We want *Mankind Divided* to feel familiar to anyone who has played *Human Revolution*, but to also and absolutely have its own identity," Szczepkowski said when we asked him about designing audio for the sequel.

22 YOU CAN BE A PACIFIST

We've talked about how important choice is to *Deus Ex* and how the game is seeking to open itself up to player choice as much as possible. If there's anything that encapsulates that ethos, it is surely this: you don't have to kill a single person in the game if you don't want to. The fact that the game is flexible enough to allow you to do just that is an shows how much it values freedom in your approach.

23 CHOICE MATTERS

As well as having choice on how you play the game, you can have a big impact on how the story progresses. Characters will live or die based on decisions that you make and Eidos Montreal has indicated that the game's ending will be about more than selecting one of a number of pre-defined options as in *Human Revolution*.

24 J.C. COULD APPEAR

Eidos Montreal has said that there will be bits of lore for fans to find relating to the original *Deus Ex* game in *Mankind Divided*. The game is actually set the year that *Deus Ex*'s original protagonist, J.C. Denton, was born, so we reckon he could make an appearance in the game. Could we even be moving towards a *Deus Ex* remake when Eidos Montreal moves on from *Mankind Divided*?

25 IT'S OUT SOON

The release date for *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided* is 23 February. Square Enix was running a pre-order system for the game where more rewards were unlocked based on the number of people that purchased it, with the highest tier being that the game would be released early. Everyone hated it, though, so Square backed down and fixed the release date.

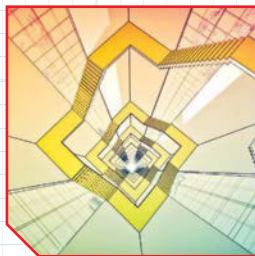
INDIEVELOPMENT

Our indie expert Paul Walker-Emig delves into the exciting, strange and intriguing world of indie development to pick out the best of what's coming to PlayStation



MANIFOLD GARDEN is one of the most intriguing and surely *the* most mind-bending game on its way to PS4. Take a cursory look at its impossible geometry and you won't be surprised to hear it is inspired by the work of M.C. Escher (in fact, it was originally named *Relativity* after one of the artist's prints). Developer William Chyr describes the game as being about, "exploring architecture and consequences in a world where physics is turned upside down." The game's puzzles seem to be primarily based on exploiting the way the game's environment loops in on itself and manipulating cubes that you can use to trigger switches and redirect the flow of water, amongst other things. We'll be honest, we're still a little confused about how all that works in practice, but that's inevitably going to be the case in a game like this where you really need to get your hands on it to comprehend the possibilities at hand. That's one of the reasons we love indie games – they are prepared to experiment and present you with something the

△×□ Look, don't ask us to explain it. Just accept that it looks incredible and go with it...

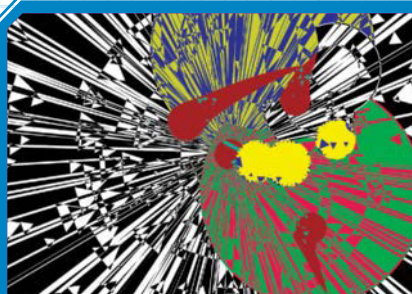


likes of which you've never seen before. *Manifold Garden* is doing just that with its minimalist gravity-based puzzles and we can't wait to give it a go on PS4.

Another PS4 title we're looking forward to – despite its painfully pretentious self-billing as a 'fourth-person' puzzle game – is **PAVILION**. There's a wonderful dream-like quality to the game's labyrinthine world, which is rendered in intricate detail. You are thrown into that world without any explanation of why you're there and there are no tutorials explaining what you should be doing and how you should do it. It is a question of interacting with the world to discover what you can do and to learn more about the place. The twist that makes the game interesting is that you don't

control that little dude you can see in the screenshots. Instead, you interact with the game's environment in order to guide, or even force, him to travel in the right direction. For example, you might ring a bell to catch his attention, or move a stone block to send him running in another direction to avoid being crushed. There's little detail on what more the game will entail, because the developer says that it is an experience that is at its best when it's still got a shroud of mystery about it. Fair enough. We'll let you know whether it's as good as it looks when we get our hands on it and give it a go for ourselves.

We know far more about **STARBOUND** by virtue of the fact that it has been in early access on PC for ages. The game is a bit like a



DEV DIARY **Myriad's Erlend Grefsrud talks about the Pareto principle**

Suits like to trot out the 80/20 – or the Pareto – principle to explain the unexplainable. 80 per cent of the game is done in 20 per cent of the time. The flash phase of development: You solve big, important problems every day!

Sadly, the last 20 per cent will take 80 per cent of your time. You enter the grind phase when you start fixing all of those little problems. 18 months ago, I estimated three months of debugging and polish. Today, I'm certain there's less than 10 per cent left to do, so I've cleared Pareto – well, unless there's a 90/10 principle.



2D pixel art *No Man's Sky* crossed with *Minecraft*. You start the game fleeing your home planet and are presented with an infinite universe of procedurally generated planets to explore. On the surface of those planets you can mine for resources, engage in combat, undertake quests, build your own settlements, capture monsters, explore dungeons and craft weapons, and you can do it all in multiplayer, if you so choose. There's a hell of a lot to *Starbound*, then, which explains why it has been in early access for so long. What we like in particular is that it has the flexibility, creativity and potential for exploration that you'd find in a game like *Minecraft*, but it also has a structure there for those who want it in the inclusion of story-based quests. The game won't force you to follow them if all you want to do is explore and build a home for yourself, but it's cool that the option is there. *Starbound* is an incredibly ambitious game, despite its



ΔΟΧ The simplicity of *Starbound*'s art style belies the complexity and depth of its systems.



“THERE'S A WONDERFUL DREAM-LIKE QUALITY TO THE GAME'S LABYRINTHINE WORLD”



ΔΟΧ Sometimes we just want to play a game where we shoot things. Thanks, *Neon Chrome*.

basic visuals. If Chucklefish can get it right, it could be very special.

We're going to describe our final game as *The Raid* meets *Blade Runner*. **NEON CHROME** is about shooting your way through a residential arcology in a cyberpunk future. The top-down shooter isn't just about pointing and firing. Completing levels and finding items within the game will allow you to unlock new roles to aid in your quest of destruction. The game has a strong focus on replayability in that its levels have an element of procedural generation to offer you a different experience every time you play. Best of all, you can blow holes in walls; we like game where you can blow holes in walls. *Neon Chrome* is a little garish in terms of its visuals, but the important thing with a game like this is that it is fun to play. If *Neon Chrome* fulfills that criteria then we will happily forgive it.

FUNDED PIXEL NOIR

PLATFORMS: PS4, VITA
ETA: NOV 2016



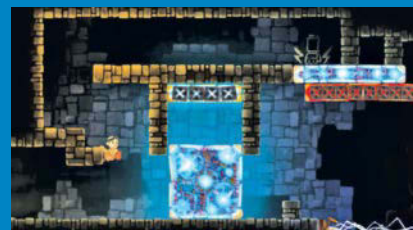
This game is something of a case of East meets West. From a gameplay perspective, it is a turn-based JRPG clearly inspired by classic *Final Fantasy* and its stable mates of the 16-bit era. It's other key lies in American hardboiled pulp fiction – you play as a down-on-his-luck private eye with a crappy apartment and a brown trench coat. A slightly odd combination, perhaps, but one that looks like it could work well.

WISHLIST A FISTFUL OF GUN



You can't tell us that *A Fistful Of Gun* wouldn't be a great fit for console. Visually, this chaotic top-down shooter looks a little bit like a Western-themed *Cannon Fodder*. It's got a bunch of characters that you can choose from with different weapons and abilities and the game also supports up to nine-player co-op. It looks like a hell of a lot of fun to us so we have got our fingers crossed that *A Fistful Of Gun* finds its way onto PlayStation in the future.

IF YOU LOVE... PORTAL



Sure, it's a 2D platformer, but if you are a *Portal* fan that loves physics and puzzles then we reckon you will enjoy *Teslagrad*.



ETA 23 FEBRUARY | PUB UBISOFT | DEV UBISOFT MONTREAL | TWITTER @FARCRYPRIMAL

Far Cry Primal

Rumble in the jungle



WELL, THIS ONE was a little out of the left-field. You've gotta hand it to Ubisoft sometimes, as for every generic and formulaic IP

(*Watch Dogs*, this means you) there's a *Far Cry* to demonstrate how creative and on the pulse the publisher can be. *Far Cry 3* and *Far Cry 4* were a joy to play, with *Blood Dragon* proving to be one of the very best and most unique digital expansions in the triple-A space. Now, in a move that no-one would have guessed, we head to circa 10,000 BCE, and to a time in which woolly mammoths and sabre-toothed tigers stalked the earth.

The premise here is that you are Takkar, a man who has lost his tribe and is now stranded in a strange land called Oros without food, shelter or any means of defending himself. From here, you'll have to craft weapons, hunt wildlife and keep yourself in good nick as you defend yourself from the natural world, and a few other aggro guys from other tribes that populate the area.

Naturally, *Far Cry Primal* looks like it'll play out in a fairly similar manner to its predecessors, although you'll be playing with sticks and stones rather than assault rifles this time out as, believe it

or not, there weren't any firearms in 10,000 BCE. Crazy, right? Still, the prospect of playing a game that is likely to be mostly melee-based sounds quite appealing to us – after all, it's not like we ever really played *Far Cry* for its shooting mechanics anyway. In the trailer, you can see a chap with a bow, so it's likely you'll be able to enjoy one of those yourself if you fancy chalking up some stealth kills from distance.

Of course, your choice of weapon will largely depend on who or what you're trying to kill. As we've mentioned, there are other tribes based in Oros who you'll certainly have the odd run-in with, and we wouldn't be too surprised to see a charismatic yet insane leader in the same vein as Pagan Min or Vaas the pirate. It's also abundantly clear from the reveal trailer that you will come to blows with human enemies at different times throughout the game. The main danger, though, appears to be nature. As an aside, when we played *Far Cry 3* we got through the first six or seven hours without dying to a human adversary – the only things that bested us were timely ambushes by a dickhead of a big cat and a very opportunistic shark. Hopefully *Far Cry Primal* will be geared in the

same way, as fighting nature rather than human enemies is a great concept.

This ties into the survival focus of the game. It's clear that you'll have to hunt animals for food, and crafting tools, building fires and generally not succumbing to a hostile environment are key themes. We just hope that Ubisoft doesn't shirk away from this in favour of repetitive quests and inconsequential bludgeoning of rival tribesmen.

This comes down to how brave Ubisoft Montreal is feeling, as good survival mechanics are hard to come by outside of stuff like *DayZ* or even *Don't Starve*. After all, this is an area where the *Tomb Raider* reboot, which is a great game, shot itself in the foot – after highlighting all of the ways in which you'd have to stay alive on a hostile island, it then reneged on all of it and only made you hunt wildlife if you fancied a bit of extra XP. We want *Primal* to commit to survivalism, as if it does, it could be one of the most interesting games of 2016.

Steve Holmes

FAR CRY PRIMAL is sporting a fetching leopard skin loincloth at Ubisoft Montreal. For more info, run on over to ubisoft.com/en-GB/game/far-cry-primal

△×□ Far Cry is always full of amazing non-scripted encounters with wildlife.

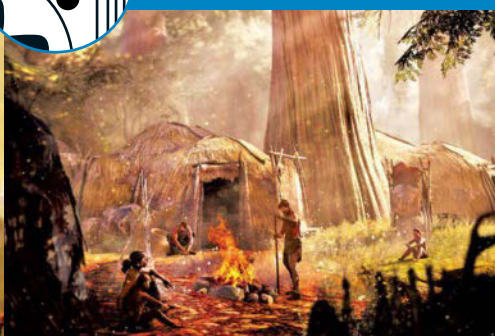
WE WOULDN'T BE TOO SURPRISED TO SEE A CHARISMATIC YET INSANE LEADER IN THE SAME VENUE AS PAIN, AN MIN OR VAAS.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ Oros promises to be a vast open world that encourages exploration.
- There's a large selection of wildlife for you to hunt or be hunted by.
- × There looks to be a pretty deep weapon crafting system.
- It's a brave foray into new territory – not many other franchises are as adaptable as *Far Cry*.



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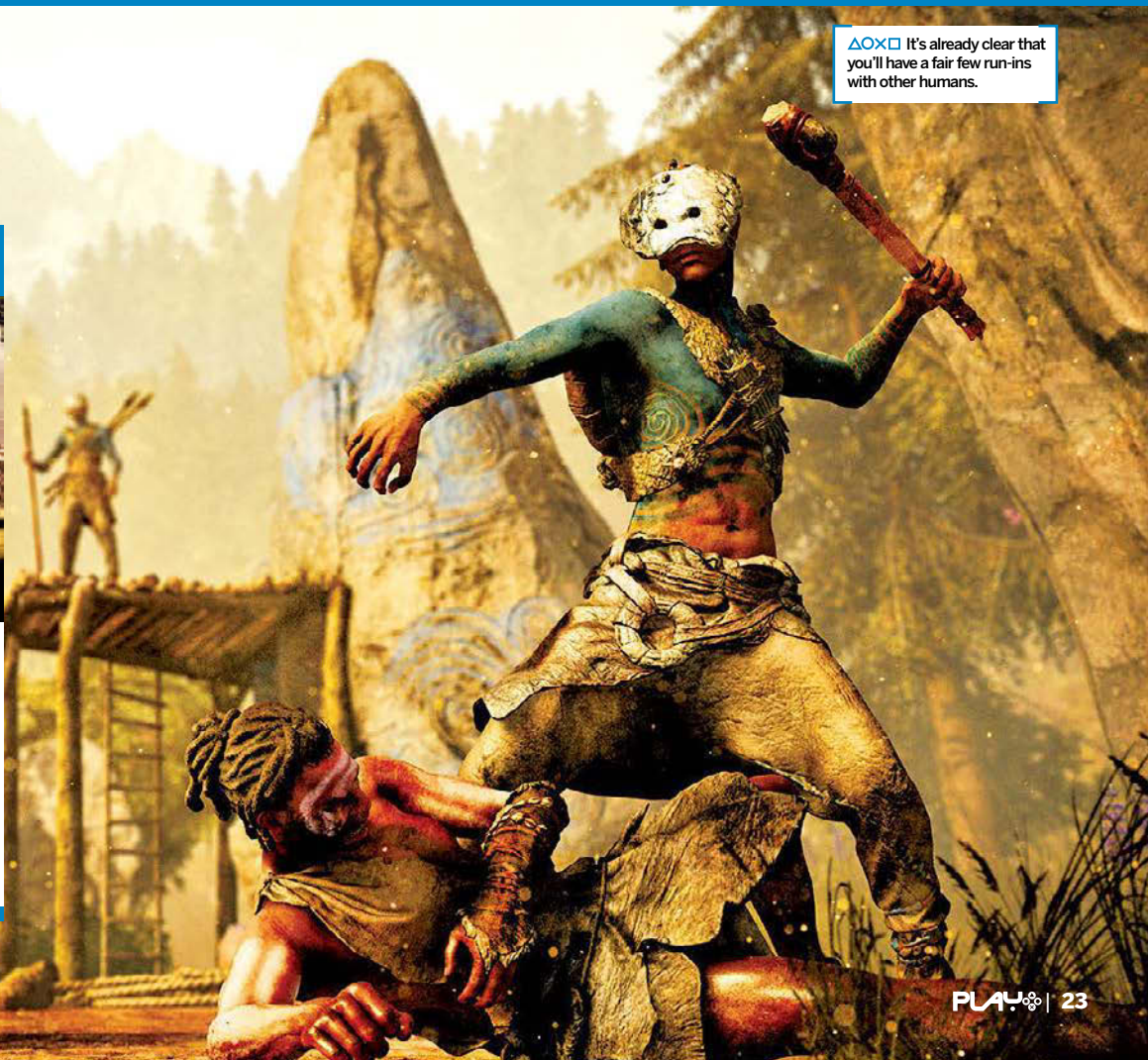


FOOD CHAIN

Everything in Oros wants you dead

Luckily for you, the Share button was pretty much built for games like *Far Cry*. Ubisoft always does a great job of fleshing out the series' vast open worlds, and populates them with some seriously scary wildlife. We'll never forget the first time we were attacked and killed by a big cat in *Far Cry 3* – it's a crying shame there was no Share button back in the old days, as it was really quite hilarious.

△×□ It's already clear that you'll have a fair few run-ins with other humans.





ETA 26 FEBRUARY | PUB EA | DEV DICE | TWITTER @MIRRORSEDGE

Mirror's Edge Catalyst

Another roll of the DICE



IT'S SOMETHING OF an irony that *Mirror's Edge* protagonist, Faith, defines herself in her role as a messenger, because if there's something the original *Mirror's Edge* didn't do, it is deliver. Don't get us wrong, *Mirror's Edge* was an interesting game with a unique concept, but it just didn't quite fulfil its potential. Since day

are that those frustrating moments when you met a dead end and didn't know where to go in the first game will be gone, or at least, far less frequent. That's partly because in this open world, you've almost always got more than one option when it comes to what route you take. This isn't about picking the right or wrong option, but about carving out a path on the fly

"DICE IS DOING EVERYTHING IT CAN TO ENSURE THAT THE GAME IS ALWAYS MOVING"

one, we've been saying that what we want from *Catalyst* is for it to meet the promise that we saw in the original game and we've now got good reason to believe that it might just do that.

We say that, because we've now had some hands-on time with *Mirror's Edge*. What struck us almost immediately was that the sense of flow you want from the title is there. Our impressions

depending on your own choices and instincts. We haven't played enough of the game to know

whether that will extend to the experience at large, but that the game feels fluid and open at this early stage is a good sign.

Also conducive to the free flow feel of *Catalyst* is the simplicity of the controls with which you navigate those beautiful, minimalist environments. There's one button for upward momentum and one for down.

We know that sounds a little too basic, but in practice it works for this game by virtue of the fact that momentum is the priority. Moving swiftly throughout the world, you need to be able to respond quickly as you're confronted with environment objects – you don't need complicated button inputs, because that's only ever going to get in the way. It's another example of the way that DICE is doing everything that it can in order to ensure that the game is always moving, your position and situation always in flux, and that's for the better.

The weakest element of the first *Mirror's Edge* was the combat and it seems that DICE has made improvements here too. With guns out the window, the developer has been able to focus on getting melee combat right. As we jumped from wall runs to leap atop foes, pulled off fancy backflip kicks, and knocked down our antagonists in all manner of other such athletic ways, we got the impression that combat is far better integrated into the flow of the game than it

PRIOR FORM

BATTLEFIELD 4 The last mainline *Battlefield* game was great, but it was sullied by server problems at launch. That won't be a problem with single-player title *Mirror's Edge*.

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

 Fantastic. Played the demo at Gamescom and E3. Open world and the revamped movement system are both stellar.
@joshwaM

 Combat is a bit clunky but a brilliant game imo if they can fix the issues the original had the sequel could be even better.
@daytripper80

 There's still a hole in the door after playing the first one.
@d3j08



ΔOX□ Well, that's just a little bit 1984 (and we're not talking about *The Phantom Pain*).



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

 Marking an point on the map activates a vision mode that shows optimum paths.

 Environmental puzzles will challenge your smarts as well as your reaction speeds.

 DICE promises that there will be no loading screens in the game's large open world.

 The game's clean art style makes the city that you're exploring look stunning.

was in the original, where combat always felt like an obstacle at odds with the general direction of the game. We'd still like to see *Catalyst* focus on running from danger, rather than actively seeking it out – it's one of the things that marks it out as so different from other games, after all – though we fear that it won't. Whether that's the case or not, at least combat should feel like a more organic part of the experience in this game.

We need more time with *Mirror's Edge Catalyst* before we can say whether it is the game that we've hoped it can be. However, in showing us an experience that reflected some of the best of what the original game had to offer, with the frustrations removed, what we've played so far has left us positive about the prospect of this game delivering.

Paul Walker-Emig

MIRROR'S EDGE CATALYST is running around on DICE's rooftops. Check the website for more details: mirrorsedge.com



ΔOX□ It might be a bit totalitarian, but you can't deny the city is nice to look at.

ETA 1 DECEMBER | PUB UBISOFT | DEV UBISOFT MONTREAL | TWITTER @RAINBOW6GAME

Rainbow Six Siege

Clancy that



EVERYTHING MATTERS IN

Rainbow Six Siege. A single tiny mistake can see you dropped by your opponents unceremoniously, putting you out of the match until the next round. One well-coordinated attack that lasts a matter of seconds can turn a game on its head. In our time with the game’s beta, we’ve experienced first hand how the vital importance of every encounter and tactical decision can make *Siege* into a tense and thrilling multiplayer shooter.

When we say ‘thrilling’, it is important to clarify that it is thrilling in a completely different way to most other shooters out there. Take *Call Of Duty* as an example. In that game, you might sprint around the map for a minute or two, take out seven opponents, fire off some fancy Killstreak, get killed, drop back in within a couple of seconds, and do it all over again. You can’t do that in *Siege*. Here, you’re always well aware of your vulnerability and that makes you play in a completely different way.

Rather than barrelling around the map at full pelt, you’re much more likely to be crouched down next to a doorway, leaning to the side, gradually moving inch by inch to get a view of what’s down the corridor. In those moments when that cautious scoping out of your environment reveals an enemy and you react quickly to fire a few perfectly placed shots to take them down, it is incredibly satisfying. Remember that this is a game based around matches of five-versus-five and that death means you’re gone until the next round – that means that this single kill really has an impact. That player won’t be respawning in a matter of moments and that kill won’t be lost amongst the dozens of other kills that your teammates would be making in other online shooters. You know that you’ve made a huge contribution to your team in that one moment and that makes it incredibly rewarding.

That sense of satisfaction doesn’t just apply to killing the enemy team, it also comes into play when it comes to strategy. When you’re playing as the defending team, for example, you’ll have the most success when you coordinate your

defences – you block off certain entry points by reinforcing walls, lay down barbed wire to slow down opponents at key choke points, make the decision to barricade certain doors and windows, or leave them open to give you line of sight. Get all that right, to the effect that your foes are funnelled into the areas that you want them to be in, and smartly employ your Operators special ability – using Smoke’s gas grenades to force enemies to retreat from an assault, for example – and you’ll gain as much satisfaction from the fact that you made the right decisions as you will from taking the enemy down with bullets.

It would be fair to say that we’re pretty excited about *Siege*, then, but that doesn’t mean we haven’t spotted any potential problems. One of those is that, while all multiplayer shooters are reliant on the quality of your teammates to some extent, *Siege* is even more so. Get lumped in with an idiot and you might find yourself and a teammate dropped by friendly fire within a minute of starting a game, meaning you’ve already lost. This is, however, the price you pay for a game that’s structured to ensure there are consequences to your actions.

The other problem is that there’s a lack of differentiation between the game’s modes. Regardless of whether you play Hostage Rescue, Bomb Defuse or the Secure Area modes, they all play out exactly the same in that one team fortifies an area, one attacks it, and 99 per cent of the time the game is won by eliminating the other team, rather than by achieving the objective. That didn’t stop us having fun, but we wonder how that will affect its longevity.

Despite those concerns about the game, the impression that we are left with from the beta is that it is the tactical, considered and rewarding shooter that Ubisoft said it intended to create. Let’s see if we feel that way about it in December.

Paul Walker-Emig

SIEGE is being developed behind the fortified walls at Ubisoft Montreal. Check the website for more details: rainbow6.ubi.com



SHARE THIS



KILL CAM

Capture your clutch moments

Because *Rainbow Six Siege* is pretty brutal in terms of its realism, it’s possible to finish off half an enemy team, or even the whole team, within a matter of moments. That’s why it’s perfect for capturing those clutch moments where you single-handedly win a match for your team.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Operators come with different abilities that can change how you approach a match.



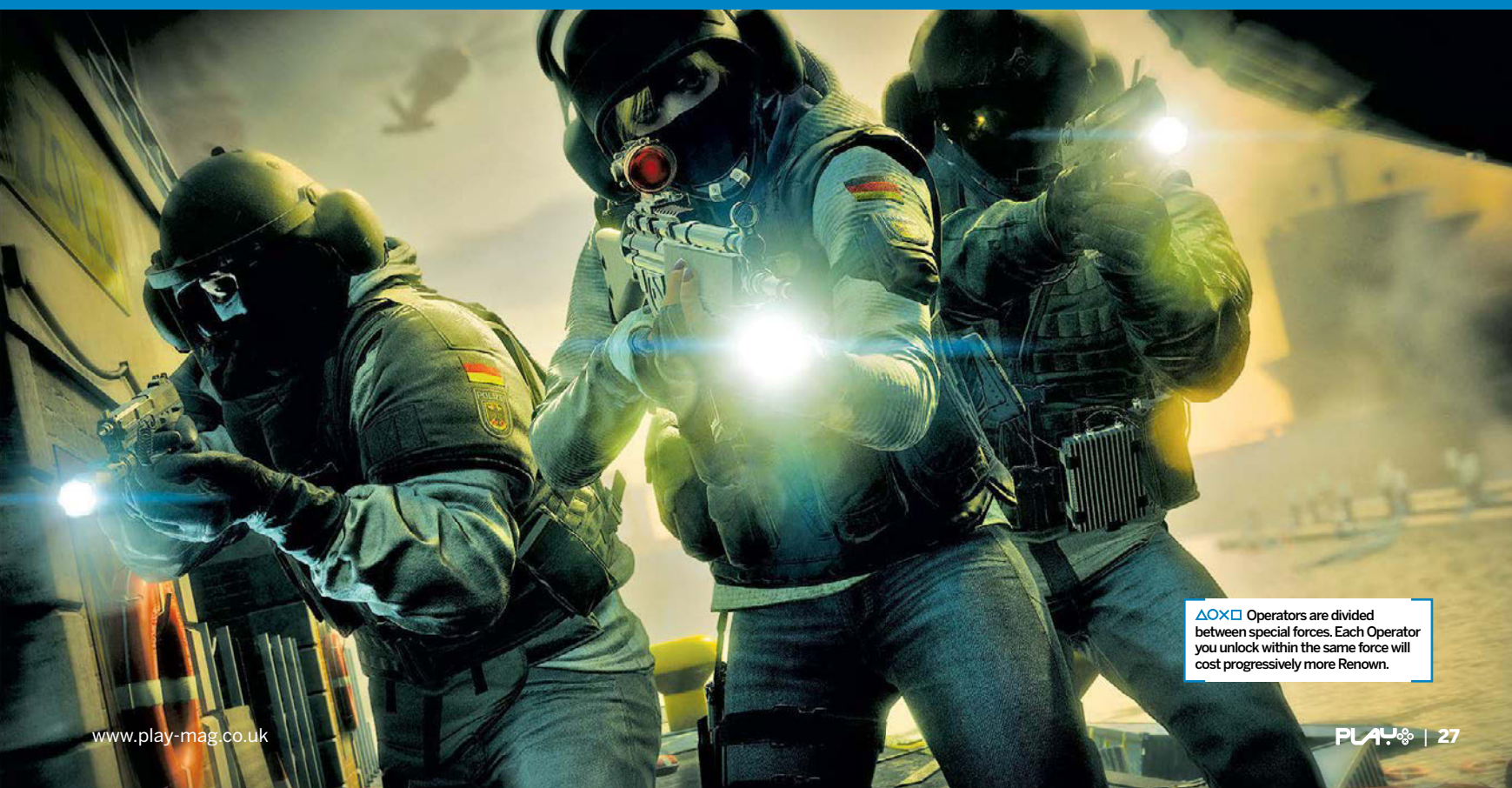
You can blow holes through the environment to open up gaps to aim through.



Rappelling up a wall and then smashing through a window will always be awesome.



You can choose where to spawn as attackers or where to defend as defenders.



△×□ Operators are divided between special forces. Each Operator you unlock within the same force will cost progressively more Renown.



ETA 26 JANUARY 2016 | PUB THEKLA, INC | DEV IN-HOUSE | TWITTER @WITNESSGAME

The Witness

The lonely island



IS THE WITNESS going to be a fun game? We don't particularly think it's going to be – but please don't stop reading there. Just because it isn't going to be *fun* doesn't mean it isn't going to be *interesting*. Quite honestly, *Braid* wasn't that *fun*, right? But it was different, it was interesting, and you *did* finish it (maybe). So that's kind of what we're thinking is going to happen with *The Witness* – it's going to have that quiet, self-effacing charm, that hint of intrigue that'll grab your attention in the first few minutes, that unmistakable aura around it that can only be associated with one Jonathan Blow.

The Witness is going to be hard. Blow wants you to get stuck. It's been built like that compound from *The Prisoner* – 'It's okay to leave whenever you want' and all that, you just won't be able to. The island the game is set on is decorated with Blow's lifetime memories – there are hints to the life of the game's creator everywhere (one statue nestled in a level even looks a bit like him) and

that's kind of the point. Blow wants you to remain here, trapped, isolated within his autobiography.

But this isn't *Myst*. You're not going to be wandering around aimlessly for hours trying to soak in the environmental storytelling because 'there isn't much else to do'. No, in *The Witness* Blow has come up with a new through-line for the way his puzzles work: the island itself houses a

“THE STRUCTURE OF THE GAME IS ACTIVELY DESIGNED TO MAKE IT OKAY FOR YOU TO GET STUCK”

selection of 'father puzzles' you must solve to pick away at the game's central mystery, but within these there are smaller puzzles to complete... and it only gets more modular from there.

We're intrigued by the idea of people picking up this game randomly – seeing it in a sale or having it recommended to them by a friend – because going in blind really is the best way to experience

it. We're going to hear the best reports of this game from people that had no pre-compiled assumptions, no idea of how it works. We'll hear stories of how they overcame this incredible left-field puzzle with lateral thinking, hear them ooze with pride, only to be rebutted with 'Yeah, but *then* what happened?' *The Witness*, it seems, wants to talk to you: the levels are designed in such a way

as to communicate something to you – something vague, yet powerful. Think *Braid*, but more mentally intrusive.

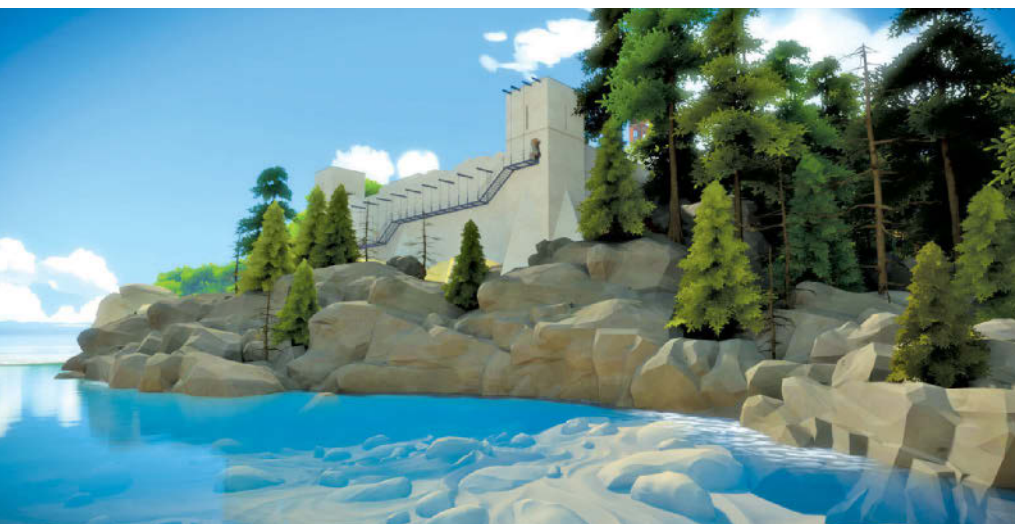
The structure of the game is actively designed to make it completely okay for you to get stuck... if anything's too difficult,

you can just wander off freely and try something else for a while. You'll only have the nagging shame of defeat bothering you until you get back to the puzzle you abandoned.

And that's where we think *The Witness* is really going to shine: we think it's going to very cleverly deconstruct what it *is* to be a puzzle game player. The game – contrary to popular belief – doesn't



△×□ We're mostly looking forward to *The Witness* because of the weird story it's inevitably got running through it, hidden behind all these obscure modular puzzles.



△×□ The island of *The Witness* is by no means boring – on the contrary, its landscapes and colours are sublime.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



It's been in development since Jonathan Blow released *Braid* way back in 2008.



It's going to have 650 puzzles in it, which Blow says will take you 100 hours to solve.



The entire story of the game will be told through ambient and direct audio logs.



Jonathan Blow is an intriguing auteur – he'll have something to say with this game.



THE MAGIC MOMENT

The moment that will change your perspective of *The Witness*



Before *The Witness* came into being as a game in its own right, Blow had been experimenting with a variety of other game concepts, one of which involved leading players up to a 'magic moment' – something that would fundamentally alter the player's experience of the game. That element was taken from the proto-game Blow was working on before *The Witness* and reworked to fit into the current project, though information on specifically what the moment is remains elusive, likely due to Blow's insistence of keeping the gameplay experience as spoiler-free as possible.

want to make you feel stupid, or ignorant, or lost. No, it wants you to be incredibly clever, and that's why it's been designed like it has. It's not patronising, there are no hints and by God is it hard... but that just means every slight discovery you make in the game, every iota of progress, is yours and yours alone. If you complete *The Witness*, Blow will attest, you won't just *feel* smart, oh no: you will *actually* have to be really, really clever. And that's the kind of power fantasy that we're really excited about living through in a game – one that doesn't come around often enough.

Dom Peppiatt

THE WITNESS is being carefully crafted by Jonathan Blow and Thekla, Inc. It will be released on 26 January 2016, make sure your brain is ready at the-witness.net

GENRE DEFINING

Resident Evil may have laid the template for survival horror, but it was the second game that defined it. It is the best survival horror game in the *Resident Evil* series (*Resi 4* is great, but it's an action game) and in some fans' minds the best survival horror game, full stop. So we think many will be far more excited about news of the *Resident Evil 2* remake than they were for the remake of the original.

BAD FIRST DAY

Leon, one of *Resident Evil*'s most iconic characters, was introduced to the series in *Resident Evil 2*. He was due to start his first day as a police officer for the Raccoon City Police Department, but showed up late, only to find the city overrun by zombies. Teaming up with Claire Redfield, Leon successfully finds and escapes the Umbrella facility responsible for the zombie breakout.

PERSPECTIVE SHIFT

You can choose to start the game either as Leon or Claire. That's your 'A' scenario. After finishing the story, you can then play a 'B' scenario to witness the events from the other character's perspective. Those scenarios will be different depending on which character you start with, meaning there are effectively four ways of experiencing the game.

FRANCHISE PLAYER

Leon has become a key character that appears in multiple *Resident Evil* games. He is also a protagonist in two other *Resident Evil* games: *Resident Evil 4* and *Resident Evil 6*. The former was influential on the action genre and served to reinvigorate the *Resident Evil* series. Leon has the honour, then, of appearing in the two of the best *Resident Evil* games.

ETA 2016 | PUB CAPCOM | DEV IN-HOUSE | TWITTER @RE_GAMES

Resident Evil 2

ANATOMY OF... LEON

After the success of the first *Resident Evil* remake, Capcom is now set to bring back Leon and Claire in an HD remake of the PlayStation classic, *Resident Evil 2*...

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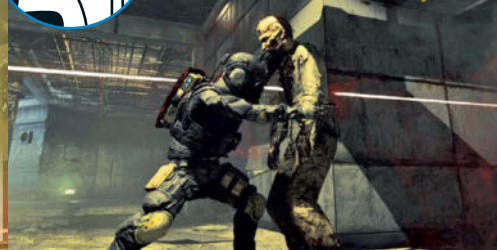
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KILLS WITH SKILLS

Because everyone needs to see your 'oooh shit!' moment

Resident Evil games have always had those moments that make you recoil with horror/pleasure, and multiplayer shooters tend to have great, emergent moments throughout. Combine the two and you have the recipe for some great, shareable moments we're sure to see popping up on social feeds across the world. Saving a mate from a horde, pretending to be Barry Burton, taunting the undead – the opportunities are endless...

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



It could mean we see a *Resi* game in the world of e-sports. Maybe. Possibly.



Zombies aren't the be-all enemy – in fact, you can leverage them to be beneficial.



Analogue cover is an evolution of the cover mechanic, which is long overdue.



It's kind of, sort of, almost a bit of a *Resident Evil* sequel. Right, guys? Right?

△×□ We remember when eight zombies on screen was something to get excited about – now it's just... normal.

"UMBRELLA CORPS LOOKS BUDGET AS ALL HELL, FULL OF STIFF ANIMATIONS AND A GENERAL AIR OF CHEAPNESS"

ETA SPRING 2016 | PUB CAPCOM | DEV CAPCOM OSAKA | TWITTER @RE_GAMES

Umbrella Corps

We're not sure what it is, but it isn't Chris's blood



WELL, SO MUCH for *Resident Evil 7* – for now, we have to make do with *Umbrella Corps*, a multiplayer-only shooter set in the world of the zombie-infested franchise. It sees two teams of mercenaries battling over the assets left behind by a crumbling Umbrella Corporation (see what they did with the title?), and... well, it's proving difficult to be really excited so far.

Let's keep that cynicism to one side for now though, and indulge in some healthy, cautious optimism. *Umbrella Corps* is being made with the competitive market in mind – e-sports, basically – and it shows with how quick-paced this first-or-third-person shooter is. Everything happens at a blinding pace, with matches able to finish in a matter of seconds if everyone just runs at each other firing madly.

Fortunately, tactics exist – hiding, flanking, crawling through vents, all that good stuff – to make things that bit more interesting. Chief among these is an evolution of the cover-based systems of seemingly all other shooters: 'analog cover'. This system allows you to peek out of cover to varying degrees – the more you pop out, the more accurate you are, but more vulnerable to return fire too. It's a neat, simple touch that we can definitely

see being more widely implemented in other games in the future.

There are also zombies, unsurprisingly – but interestingly, they're not your main foe. Thanks to some in-game MacGuffin known as the Zombie Jammer, the shambling undead actually ignore you unless you shoot or otherwise attack them. This would be boring and pointless, were it not for the fact you are able to deactivate and destroy your opponents' jammers, making them targets for the brain-munching hordes. Making the zombies a tactical concept like this is a smart move, because otherwise we'd be left with yet another wave-based survival multiplayer game, and we don't need that.

But... well, it's difficult to get excited about the game thus far, and it's a feeling that's coming not just from us and you folks out there, but from those making it too. This is what the actual, official words from Capcom say about *Umbrella Corps*: "tactics and exclusive features": "aggressive firing", "finding new paths by lifting shutter doors", "flanking the enemy" and "sneak attacks from behind". That's not inspiring; it doesn't make anybody want to rush out and buy it *right now*.

And that's something *Umbrella Corps* is going to have to work hard to overcome: the initial unveiling of the game has been met with a wall of apathy.

Capcom is going to have to give us a lot of reasons as to why we should even pay attention to *Umbrella Corps*, never mind splash out the cash on it.

It doesn't help that *Umbrella Corps* looks budget as all hell, full of stiff animations and a general air of cheapness to the project. It's being released at a lower price because of this, which is something, but there's none of the usual Capcom pizzazz we see from its core *Resi* titles. It's not a deal-breaker, but if it looks like crap, how the hell does Capcom expect players with an idle curiosity to jump in?

It's early days and we've been proven wrong in the past – especially when it comes to the wildcard element of this being a multiplayer-focused shooter. But our excitement for the next title under the *Resident Evil* banner is lacking. It's simply failing to build up any hype in our bones at this point, and it feels odd that this is even a game in the *Resident Evil* series, especially with it coming on or around the series' 20th anniversary. Should Capcom announce *Umbrella Corps: Barry Burton Edition*, though, we'll gladly sing to a different tune.

Ian Dransfield

UMBRELLA CORPS is being injected with various strains of the t-Virus by Capcom Osaka. Check out capcom.co.jp/bioUC/uk/index.php for more details.



△××△ It's not all shooting zombies. Sometimes you have to shoot other things in the face too.

ETA 2016 | PUB KOEI TECMO | DEV TEAM NINJA | TWITTER @KOEITECMOEUROPE

Nioh

No, not the singer...



A LOT CAN happen in ten years.

A decade ago, PlayStation 3 was still in its chunky infancy, upsetting people with its incessant system

updates, rumble-less controller and choice of *Lair* as a launch title. And yet it's ten years since Team Ninja announced *Nioh*, a spiritual nod to samurai favourite *Onimusha*, and a natural extension of the studio's celebrated *Ninja Gaiden* series.

As quickly as *Nioh* appeared, though, it was gone. Not an uncommon event in gaming – projects disappear into development hell every day. It's rare, though, for one to suddenly resurface, fresh for a new console generation and ready to duke it out with the big boys.

There's a good reason Team Ninja has plunged its hands deep into the archives and yanked *Nioh* out from its digital grave. Like the answer to most videogame questions these days, it's all about *Dark Souls*.

From's success story has helped to reshape the narrative around Japanese games. For years, Japanese developers looked to the West for inspiration; to try to expand a dwindling audience and capture some of the blockbuster bravado that American games seemed to be enjoying. And then an odd, near-impenetrable action RPG called *Demon's Souls* appeared, caught fire among the type of audience that people listen to, and the rest is very much history.

So it should come as no surprise that *Nioh* is a much more deliberate, methodical action game than *Ninja Gaiden*. The pace is slower, the animation more robust. Your samurai hero, who looks extraordinarily similar to *The Witcher's* Geralt Of Rivia, patiently waits for attacks from his adversaries, before sidestepping and striking back with venom. If he was a fighter, he'd be Anderson Silva, lulling his opponents into a false sense of security and dominance, before countering with a crippling riposte. Only, y'know, with less steroids.



"IF HE WAS A FIGHTER, HE'D BE ANDERSON SILVA, LULLING HIS OPPONENTS INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY AND DOMINANCE"

Given the devilish nature of your enemy, *Nioh's* setting will be familiar to those who ploughed through the *Onimusha* games back on PS2 (including the third one, which co-starred Jean Reno for some reason everybody has forgotten). This is Sengoku-era Japan, where Oni (demons) run riot and Ronin need to generally sort the whole mess out before Japan falls into ruin.

Expect a slew of hideous bosses to punctuate proceedings. The trailer shows us a giant millipede with a demon's face, which is horrendous enough, but also a lithe succubus type, who will no doubt split into multiple versions of herself, because that's what demon women do in Japanese videogames, right?

Despite callbacks to the likes of *Onimusha* and, of course *Ninja Gaiden*, *Nioh's* obsession with all things *Souls* is even more prominent than in its methodical combat. A stamina bar governs your own ability to strike and must be carefully managed in order to avoid leaving yourself wide open for a



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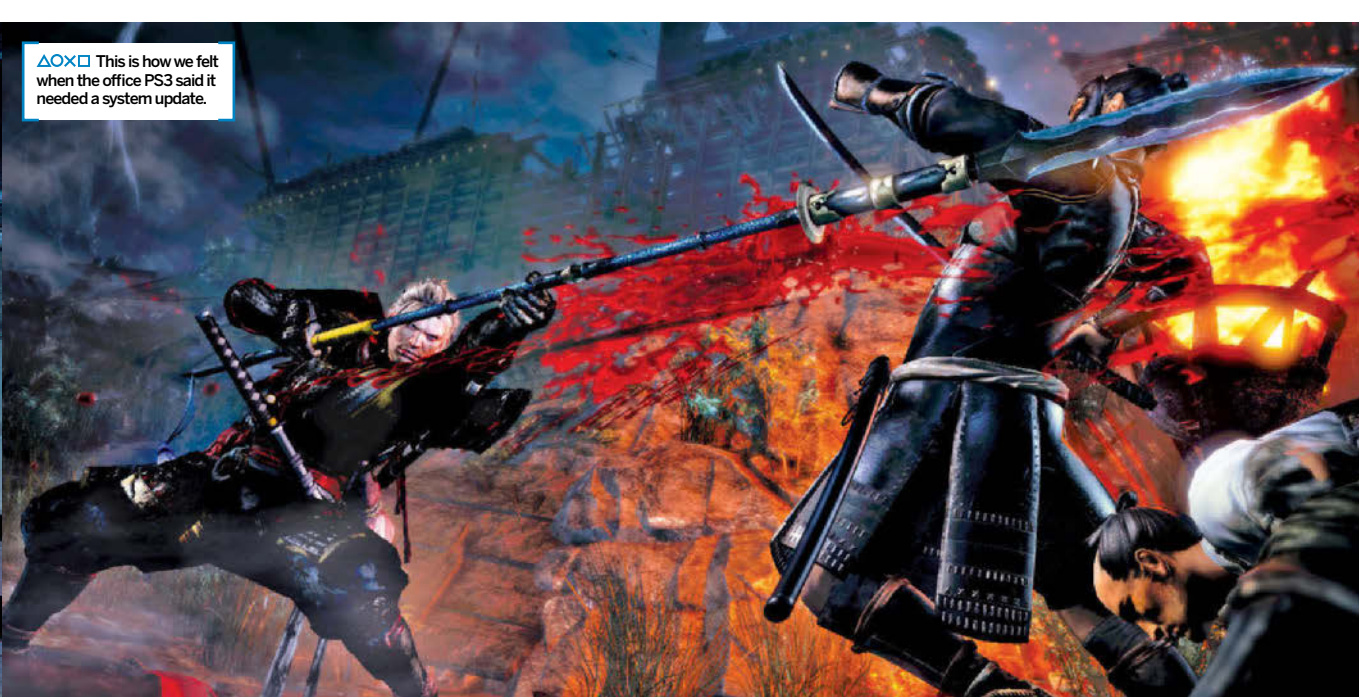
TWITCH REACTIONS

Sharing in the misery

While *Nioh's* difficulty isn't clear just yet, given Team Ninja's hardcore history and the game's unerring similarity to all things *Souls*, it's a pretty safe bet that this won't be a casual stroll through the cherry blossoms. There's something oddly cathartic about streaming your (lack of) accomplishments on brutal games, sharing in the pain with others as you all suffer through the misery and relish the fleeting moments of triumph together.



△○×□ Strange that the enemies are fiercely traditional Japanese, but the hero is generically Caucasian.



△○×□ This is how we felt when the office PS3 said it needed a system update.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- △ You'll now have ranged weapons as part of your arsenal, as well as melee attacks.
- The hero bears a striking resemblance to everyone's favourite witcher.
- × Expect combat heavily focused on timing and positioning, with little room for error.
- Fans of *Onimusha* should rejoice – this feels like a spiritual successor.

polyfanged chomp to the carotid artery. You can flick between weapons on the D-pad, and your choice of blade will define how your character moves and attacks. There are even bonfire-alikes to save your progress and level up. Instead of praising the sun, though, you're stopping at Shinto shrines and probably just praying that the demons are going to leave you alone for five minutes.

With a vague 2016 release date, there could be another year before we get to tackle the *Oni* and see just what Team Ninja has been brewing for the past decade, but it's hard to question *Nioh*'s promise. A combination of a talented and technical team testing themselves with a deep combat system sounds very pleasant. If anything featuring a 50-foot millipede could ever be called 'pleasant'.

Jon Denton

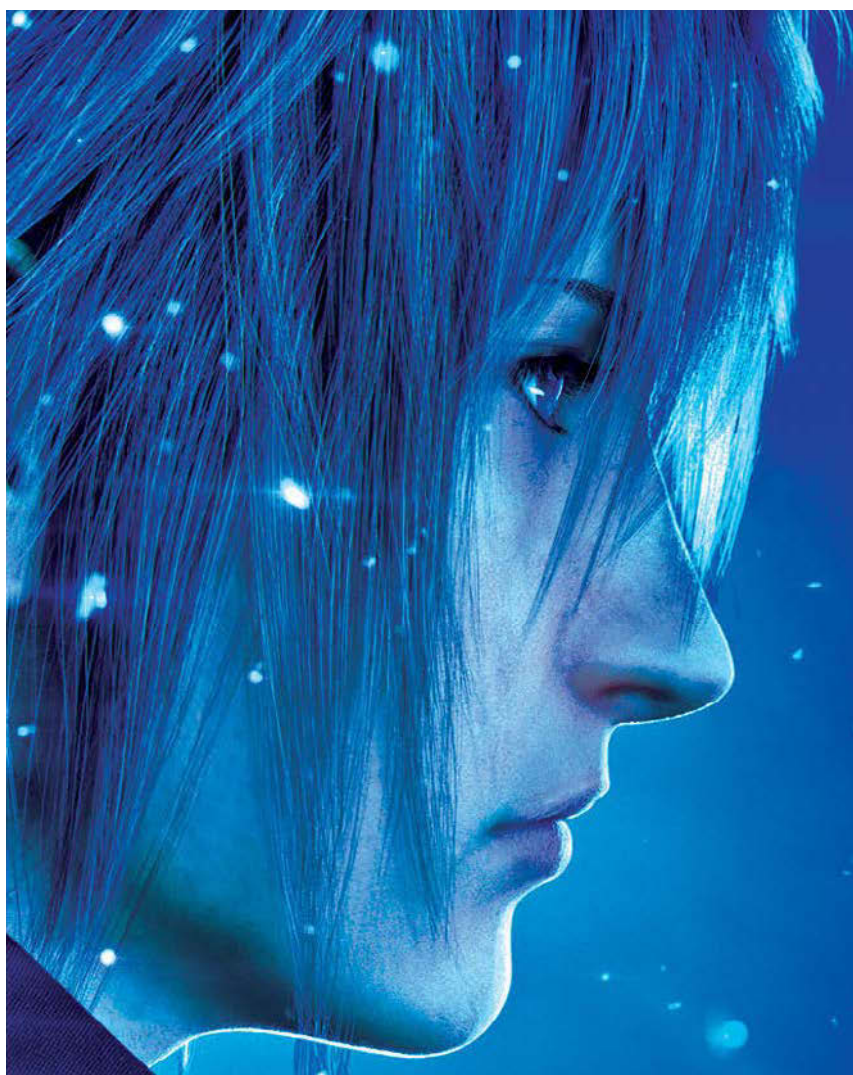
NI-OH is praying at a Shinto shrine over in Team Ninja's office. Cut your way down to the website for more details: koeitecmoeurope.com



Instant Expert

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Final Fantasy XV



PHOENIX DOWN

Final Fantasy XV wasn't always *Final Fantasy XV*. The game began life as *Final Fantasy Versus XIII*. After generating a lot of excitement when it was revealed in 2006, however, the game slumped into development hell suffering delay after delay, to the point where it seemed the game would never surface. Thankfully, the game rose from the ashes in its new form as the game we now know as *Final Fantasy XV*.

CRYSTAL CLEAR

You will take control of Noctis, a prince of the kingdom of Lucis. At the beginning of the game, Lucis is preparing to engage in peace negotiations with the kingdom of Niflheim. Niflheim betrays Lucis, though, invading on the eve of the summit and gaining control of the crystal that lends Lucis its power. This leaves you as an exile on the run who will have to find a way of taking on Niflheim and freeing Lucis.

LADS ON TOUR

Noctis undertakes his journey with three companions. The fact that they're all dressed in black and all have hairstyles with varying degrees of spikiness makes them look like a boy band, but we're hoping that we'll come to love our brothers in exile. We better do, because we'll be packed in a car and fighting side-by-side with them as we travel through *FFXV*'s huge world.

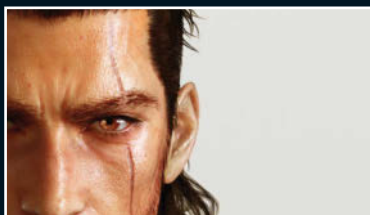
HEART ATTACK

One of the most notable changes made to *FFXV*'s is in its combat system. Combat is far more action-based than it has been in the past. It's a system that's influenced by the *Kingdom Hearts* series and that is simple at a base level. However, timing attacks and factoring in special attacks, summons and enemy weaknesses should add a complexity that will make it engaging in the long term.

SEE THE SIGHTS

Most of what we've seen on *FFXV* has been in the wilderness. There will also be big cities to explore, too. So far we know about the Shinjuku-inspired metropolis that is Insomnia and Lestallum, which is inspired by Havana, Cuba. Having diversity in locations is an important part of making you feel like you've been on a journey in a game like this, so we hope there are going to be a lot of unique locations.

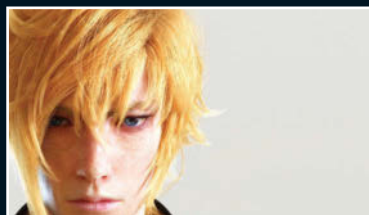
ATTACK OF THE CLONES



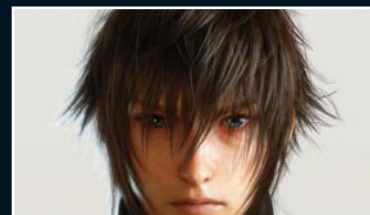
One element that we're a bit unsure about in *Final Fantasy XV* is the cast of characters that we'll be playing through the game with. First up is Gladiolus, who is from a noble family closely linked to Noctis.



Then there is Ignis, an intelligent tactician and Prompto, who has a reputation as something of a joker. Other guest characters will join your party throughout the game, but everything we've heard so far indicates that is the core.



It's not that we've got anything against those characters, but one of the things we love about *Final Fantasy* is meeting and building up a party of characters with different strengths that we can choose from.



The fact is, the characters we're stuck with all look a little samey, when we want to see diversity in those joining us on our quest. Perhaps *FFXV* can prove us wrong and show why this design decision makes sense.

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PREVIEW

A quick look at some of the other awesome games that are just around the corner

1 GRAVITY RUSH REMASTERED

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 10 FEBRUARY

AS WELL AS announcing that a sequel to *Gravity Rush* is in development for PS4, Sony has also revealed that the console will be getting a remastered version of the PS Vita title. We're going to repeat what we say about *Yakuza* here: *Gravity Rush* is a great game (we gave it 9/10), but not that many people seemed to have played it. So we think it's good to see the game getting a release on a console where people are likely to give it a go. Don't get us wrong, we'd prefer to see more new games rather than remasters, but if remasters are going to continue to be made, then they should be games like this.

2 STAR OCEAN: INTEGRITY & FAITHLESSNESS

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 2016

THE FIFTH MAINLINE game in the *Star Ocean* series looks like it will remain faithful to the series' lineage. It continues with battles based around an action-RPG system where you are free to switch between party members. Chronologically, the game takes place between *Star Ocean: The Second Story* and *Star Ocean: Till The End Of Time*. We don't yet know much about the story, other than that it is set on a planet called Faykreed, 6,000 light years from Earth, and that there are four confirmed party members. It's a JRPG, so of course one of them suffers from amnesia.



3 EVERYBODY'S GOLF 4 MAFIA III

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 2016

YOU SHOULD FORGET about Rory McIlroy's *PGA Tour*. Forget about *The Golf Club*. A new *Everybody's Golf* is coming to PS4 and that's the only golf game you are going to need. It looks like the game will place a strong focus on social elements and it is described as offering open world entertainment that presumably allows you to undertake activities other than golf with your friends. The ability to develop your own resort has also been teased as a possibility, too. What we have here, then, is an *Everybody's Golf* that should continue with the satisfying gameplay, add the ability to create golf courses, and place a strong focus on multiplayer and social gaming. Sounds good to us.

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 2016

WE LOVE THE New Orleans setting of *Mafia III* along with news that its 1968 setting means it's going to have excellent tunes from the likes of The Kinks and The Rolling Stones. Perhaps the most interesting thing about the game, however, is the way it will reference what was going on in post-Vietnam US in terms of racism, the assassination of Martin Luther King, corruption, and so on. We're also intrigued with how the game will deal with the gang warfare that's going on and the ways we might be engaging with it. Whether the former will get lost in the latter remains to be seen, but the focus on violence suggests that is a possibility. All we can say for sure at is that *Mafia III* is a game we're interested in.



ROUNDUP



5

5 SNIPER: GHOST WARRIOR 3

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q2 2016

THE THIRD GAME in the *Ghost Warrior* series looks more ambitious than the previous games, moving into an open-world setting that's looking great in *CryEngine 3*. One of the things we like about the game is that you have to gather intel so objectives appear on your map, which makes sense as you're behind enemy lines. While there have been some decent sniping games released over the years, there's been nothing spectacular. Whether *Ghost Warrior 3*'s move to a open setting and its attempt to offer players more choice when it comes to play style means it will become that game remains to be seen.



6

7 STREET FIGHTER V

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2016

CAPCOM KEEPS ON rolling out the new character reveals for *Street Fighter V*. Given that we've already seen a few characters from *Street Fighter Alpha 3* making an appearance in the game, we can't say we were massively surprised when Capcom announced that colourful wrestler R. Mika and wealthy snob Karin Kanzuki would be appearing in the game. Still, we're delighted to see them, if for no other reason that there are now more german suplexes in *Street Fighter V*. Speaking of suplexes, we now know that Zangief will be appearing. Capcom has also announced a brand spanking new character, in the form of a badass Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu-practicing woman named Laura.



8

6 YAKUZA

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2016

THE TREND FOR HD remakes continues with Sega revealing that a remake of the original *Yakuza*, which first came out on PS2, is coming to PS4. The game is set to release in Japan in January, so hopefully it'll be on its way to these shores not too long after. Sega promises that as well as having updated visuals, the game is being adapted to ensure it is more user-friendly, and that it will include new scenarios that didn't appear in the original game. Despite having something of a cult following, there are still plenty of people who have never played a *Yakuza* game, so this could prove to be a good introduction to the series ahead of the release of *Yakuza 6* on PS4 later in the year.

8 DISHONORED 2

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: 2016

SINCE THE REVEAL of *Dishonored 2*, Arkane Studios' Harvey Smith has elaborated on what we've seen. For a start, he said that though the game's reveal trailer was CG, everything that you see in it is something that you can do and even the surreal stage that appeared in the trailer is a level in the game called The Clockwork Mansion. The character that you appear to be chasing is called Kirin Jindosh and he is the inventor of Serkonos, the island on which the game is set. Smith also said that you start the game playing as Emily Kaldwin, but that at a point in the game, an event will happen, after which you choose whether to play as Emily or switch to Corvo, the protagonist from the first game.

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HOT TOPIC TOYS-TO-LIFE

PAUL WALKER-EMIG
SENIOR STAFF WRITER, PLAY



'TOY-TO-LIFE' GAMES, AS they have now been named, are not made to be good. They are cash traps developed with the aim of exploiting children as a means of extracting as much money from the pockets of parents as possible.

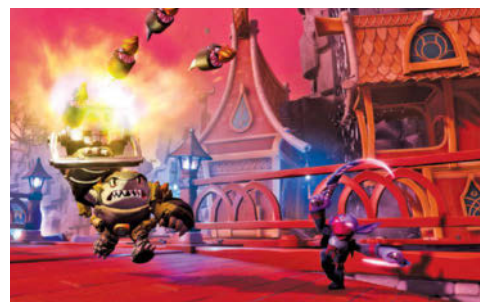
Now, I'm not naive: I know that any game made explicitly for children likely wasn't born out of a desire to create a work of art. In the pre-figure era, the decision to make kids' games was still probably, at base level, a business decision. Once that decision had been made, however, there was nothing in the way of the developers of those games getting to work making an experience that kids could enjoy. They did it with the *Lego* games, *LittleBigPlanet* and the *Ratchet & Clank* series, to name but a few.

The problem with the likes of *Skylanders*, *Disney Infinity*, and *Lego Dimensions*, is that there now very much *is* something in the way of making those games as good as they should be, and it is those little plastic figures that they're all flogging. *Lego Dimensions* is a prime example of this. In past *Lego* games, you would unlock characters through playing the game that would allow you to access new areas. In *Lego Dimensions*, you are still presented with areas that you can't access



without certain characters; the difference is that you now have to pay for the corresponding figures if you want to access them. The game is constantly reminding you that you are missing out because you haven't bought this figure or that. Remember that the base set of *Lego Dimensions* costs £100, and it is now telling you that game you've bought is incomplete; you've got to spend more if you want it all. The point here is that good game design is not the priority for these toys-to-life games. The priority is to make you spend more money buying figures and that's never going to be a benefit to you, or the quality of the games.

Speaking of buying figures, they're disgustingly expensive. Let's say you want *Lego Dimensions* and you're a fan of *Back To*



The Future. Once you've bought the game, the level pack including Marty McFly, and the Doc Brown set, you're looking at £140. *One hundred and forty pounds for a videogame*. It's a slippery slope, too – one set of figures here, another there, and before you know if you're using bin bags for shoes because you sold all your proper footwear to feed your toy addiction. We shudder to think how much it would cost if you decided, for example, to buy all the figures *Skylanders* has to offer, but you don't have to spend long totting up the numbers before you can see it tipping into the thousands rather than hundreds. Looking at those vulgar prices and taking into account how these games lock off content behind the toys they are selling, these games appear as the transparent cash grabs that they really are.

Toys-to-life games barely deserve the moniker 'game'. They are little more than vehicles to sell merchandise. They are cynical, exploitative and a waste of money. There are plenty of great games out there that are still child-friendly. Go and spend your cash on those games and not on a glorified advertising platform for plastic tat.



ΔOX□ Paul isn't aware of pop culture, meaning he is immune to *Dimensions*' charm.



DARRAN JONES

EDITOR, RETRO GAMER

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IF YOU'VE READ any of my previous debate columns you'll know I'm one of **Play**'s oldest and most cynical freelancers, and yet here I am standing in the pro camp for one of the most cynical marketing products in recent videogame history. Don't worry, hell hasn't frozen over, I just like money.

Seriously, though, I really do like money, but I also like value in my gaming and while that seems to be nowhere to be seen in the toys-to-life fad, it really does exist. The most obvious thing to remember about the toys-to-life range, are the children they are marketed at. I used to have imagination, a long time ago when I was younger, but it's been savagely beaten out of me due to the passage of time and now I save what's left of it, typically taking it out for very special occasions. Kids have imagination by the bucketload, however, and where I see a plastic piece of tat they see a cool little fellow who they can take to school, use to guard their pillow while they sleep and take on toy raids where they attack *Bratz* dolls— I've seen this first-hand and watching a Jasmine doll get decapitated by a five-year-old wielding *Spyro* isn't pretty.



△OX□ Toys-to-life brings together two of Darran's favourite things: videogames and his offspring.

The toys-to-life range of games work as a portal into another world, a world I've long since lost the ability to see and feel, but it's there and kids love it. My 10-year-old daughter has the ability to enter that world and so do the children of my friends and it's a delight to see. It's become even more relevant with the release of *Lego Dimensions*. While I can't condone Warner Bros. applying its aggressive DLC marketing to physical products, there's no denying that the toys that make up *Lego Dimensions* have even greater crossover. I couldn't finish my review of *Lego Dimensions*, for example, because Gandalf was visiting a *Lego* friend's house. I still don't know what he was doing in the master bedroom, but it proves that they're fun to play with.

As a parent, I like value for money for my kids and the toys-to-life games do offer just that. They make good pick-ups if the kids have been good, while the play sets will typically get you a good six hours-plus of quality quiet time, which every parent knows is worth its weight in gold. Ultimately, though, I love being able to sit down with my daughter



and share one of my favourite passions with her. Yes, we can do it with other games, but the creativity of *Disney Infinity* is brilliant, as proven by when she's excitedly shown me a new racetrack she's created in the streets of Agrabah. She'll also typically sit near the portal, meaning I don't have to get off my bum to change a character when it dies.

There are plenty of valid arguments you can make against the toys-to-life genre and they're become a lot easier to criticise with the ridiculous assault on the wallet that is *Lego Dimensions*, but as long as these games continue to give my child satisfaction, they will continue to be welcome in my house and in my console.

★★★★★ TEN OF THE BEST ★★★★★ REBOOT WISHES

THE LIKES OF DEUS EX AND XCOM PROVE REBOOTS CAN WORK. WE'VE PICKED OUT SOME ABSOLUTE CLASSICS THAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE REVIVED...

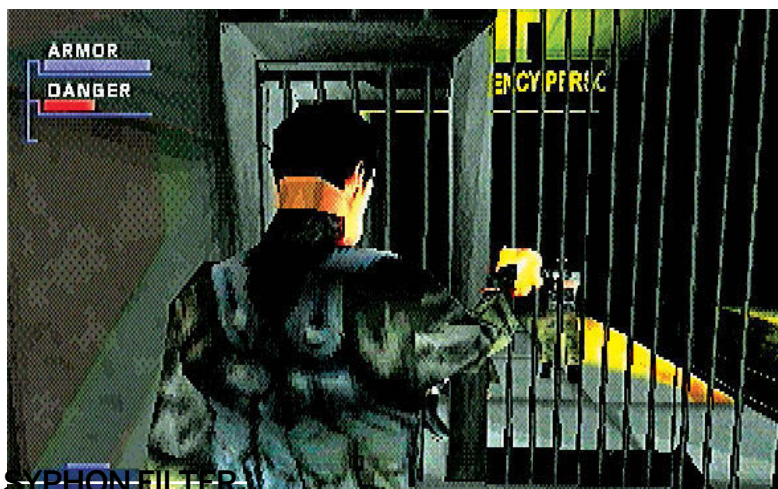


PARAPPA THE RAPPER
WITH *Rock Band* and *Guitar Hero* back and the *Amplitude* remake on the way, surely we can make the claim that rhythm-action is back in full force? What better time to bring back a PlayStation icon in *PaRappa The Rapper*? It wouldn't take a lot of money to whack out a digital version of *PaRappa* with simple 2D visuals and give us back the bizarre rhyme-spitting dog that we miss so dearly.



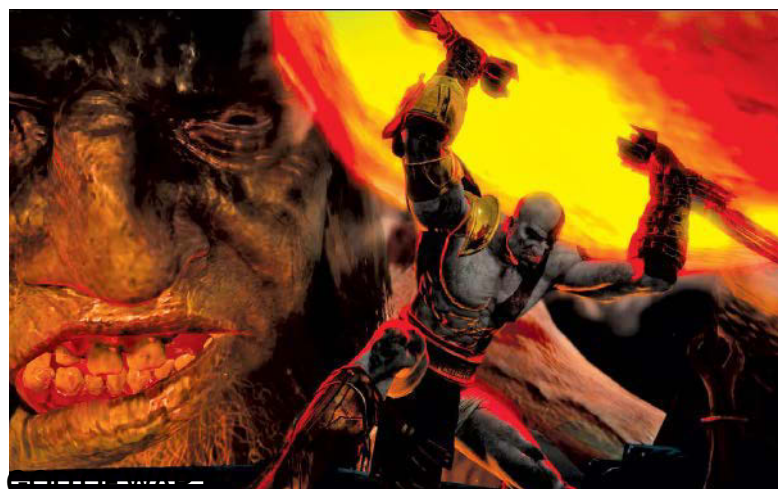
SILENT HILL

WHAT IS SO tragic about the prospect of a *Silent Hill* reboot is that we were on the verge of having one after Konami announced *Silent Hills*. But then it went and fell out with Hideo Kojima and cancelled the project. That game's playable teaser, *P.T.*, proved beyond doubt that it would have worked, too, by being absolutely terrifying. The closest we're going to get to *Silent Hills* now is if Kojima decides to revive the project under a new name once he's left Konami.



SYPHON FILTER
IT UNFAIRLY HAD a reputation as a *Metal Gear Solid* rip-off when it came out, but many of those who actually played the game remember it fondly. Sure, we could have done without some of the sub-par sequels that saw

the series peter into nonexistence after 2007, but we've now had enough of a break that we'd be happy to see it return. Wipe the story slate clean, modernise the mechanics and we'll be happy to jump right back on board.



THIS MIGHT SEEM like an odd pick given that we're expecting a *God Of War* sequel soon, but in our eyes, what *God Of War* really needs is a reboot. There are a couple of reasons for that. For one, Kratos' story feels

played out now. On a practical level, Kratos has already killed pretty much every Greek god there is. That means we're in need of a new mythology to base the series around, with new gods and a new protagonist.



COLONY WARS

NOW IS THE perfect time to reboot *Colony Wars*. Why? Because the space combat game would be a perfect fit for PlayStation VR when it launches next year. Because you're sitting down in a spaceship, the game won't have the same disconnect as other first-person VR titles where your character is walking in the game, but you're not in real life. Who would be the best candidate to develop it now that Psygnosis is no more? Well, that's a question that's up for debate.



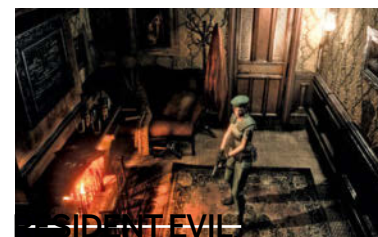
JADE COCOON

IF WE TELL you that in *Jade Cocoon* you go on a quest to become a 'Cocoon Master' and that throughout the course of your journey you can capture and train creatures to fight for you, can you hazard a guess which title was a huge influence on it? Yes, *Jade Cocoon* is basically what would happen if you made *Pokémon* into a 3D PlayStation JRPG. As well as capturing creatures – by playing a *Zelda*-like magical flute, by the way – you could also fuse them to discover new and interesting combinations. We'd love to see a new version on the PS4 or Vita.



SOULCALIBUR

IT SEEMS LIKE *SoulCalibur* can never make its mind up, constantly trying to revamp its characters inexplicably (imagine if *Street Fighter* suddenly made Ryu a charge character...) or introducing entirely new characters that tend to be poorly thought out or just replace existing ones. What that series needs is to be stripped back to a modest roster, forget about all those guest characters, and go about ensuring each character is well balanced. From there, it needs to stick to iterating on that base, rather than suddenly mixing up how a character plays (if they even show up at all) in the next game.



RESIDENT EVIL

THIS SERIES COULD sorely do with a refresh, as the identity crisis that was *Resident Evil 6* showed. Not only has the game lost its identity, though, it has become convoluted over the course of all those sequels and spin-offs as well. We think the best thing for the series would be to wipe the slate and rethink what survival horror means. Capcom has reinvented *Resident Evil* once with *Resident Evil 4*, so why not do it again in a more dramatic fashion?



BURNOUT

THE BRILLIANT ARCADE racer series that is *Burnout* has been gone for too long. We think now is the time for it to return on PS4. The latter games lost something in focusing on the whole multiplayer focus and open world thing. There was a purity and simplicity to the arcade action of *Burnout 2* and *Burnout 3* that we'd like to see a reboot recapture. Just give us an arcade racer with a simple, but rewarding takedown mechanic and we'll be happy.



TELLTALE

OKAY, SO THIS one isn't a 'game', but hear us out. We love Telltale, but we've been critical of it in the past for the problems that many of its games suffer from – a result of a creaking engine that feels like it's held together with sellotape. There's also the fact that we're tiring of its games by virtue of the fact that they are too formulaic. Telltale needs to overhaul its engine and use it to deliver an experience with some fresh ideas to convince us that it is not creatively spent.

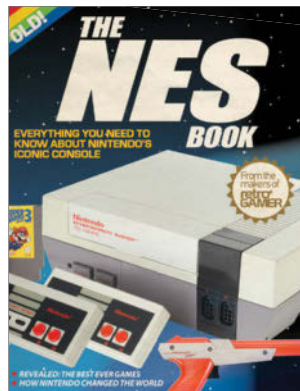
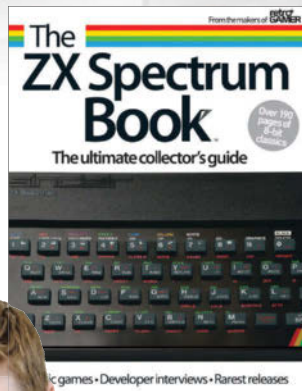
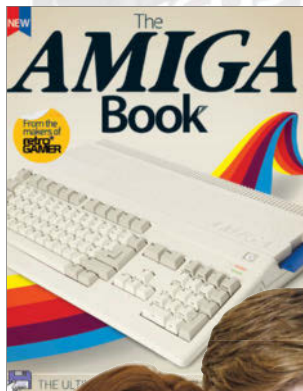
From the makers of **PLAY**

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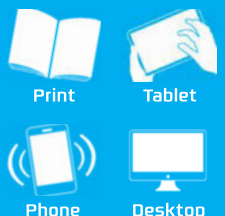
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20

— YEARS OF —

PLAYSTATION

Sony's slogan for PS4 has been 'Greatness Awaits,' but the truth is that there's no waiting to be done – Sony's console turns 20 this year and there's been plenty of greatness already. Join us as we celebrate one of the most important console lines of all time...



1995



△○×□ Accurate arcade ports made the original PlayStation an amazing piece of kit for its time.

HAVING STARTED LIFE as a collaborative project with Nintendo to create a disc-based SNES, failure to agree on contractual terms saw the two now-rivals in the console market part ways and rather than search for a new partner, Sony made the bold choice to go it alone. Having enjoyed a decent launch the year before in Japan, PlayStation made its western debut in September and history was made. 3D visuals meant players could enjoy near-arcade-perfect games from their

own sofas, the disc format also allowing for bigger worlds and much better sound than cartridges could offer. The likes of *Tekken* and *Ridge Racer* gave early adopters classic arcade experiences while newcomers like *Crash Bandicoot* and *WipEout* pushed genre boundaries and helped establish PlayStation as the place to be for cutting-edge gaming, something helped in no small part by Sony's branding and marketing of the console to make gaming 'cool'.

1996



THE PLATFORM ESTABLISHED. the following year was all about developers showing off what the new hardware was really capable of. Core Design gave us a fully three-dimensional adventure with the excellent *Tomb Raider*, while *Resident Evil* saw Capcom employ pre-rendered backgrounds and 3D characters and objects to create a cinematic horror experience that made its spiritual forerunner, *Alone In The Dark*, look positively

archaic by comparison. Nintendo's N64 would also launch in Japan and America this year, another cartridge-based machine that offered the usual first-party quality in its games but one that felt somewhat behind the times with PlayStation pushing the envelope in terms of production values. Nintendo was content as ever to do its own thing, but Sony was changing the public's perception of what gaming could and should be.

1997



AND SO BEGAN the golden age of PlayStation. Square expertly guided the JRPG into full 3D with *Final Fantasy VII*, the most open and expansive example of the genre spanning three discs to offer a larger world than ever possible on cartridge. Despite the fact that this marked the series' debut in Europe, it was hugely successful, paving the way for this to become Square's flagship franchise. PlayStation cemented itself as the place to be for original ideas with releases like the unique *PaRappa The Rapper*, the first true rhythm-action game, while sequels to the likes of *Crash* and *Tomb Raider* built on the successes of the originals. In response to Nintendo's analog input on the N64 controller, Sony also released its first dual analog controller this year, the grandfather of the DualShock standard that PlayStation owners have come to love. This was also the year that the Platinum line debuted, offering classic games for a reduced price in order to help players grow their collections without denting their wallets too badly.

PLAYSTATION'S DEFINING GAMES



WIPEOUT

RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 1995

Dripping with style, throbbing with impressive music and showing off just how quickly the PlayStation could throw around polygons, Psygnosis' racer was on the front lines of helping Sony make gaming appeal to a new crowd.



METAL GEAR SOLID

RELEASE: FEBRUARY 1999

With its open stealth-action gameplay, crazy cast of characters, impressive cut-scenes and novel Kojima twists, *MGS* is rightly held aloft as a PlayStation classic. There had never been anything quite like it before...

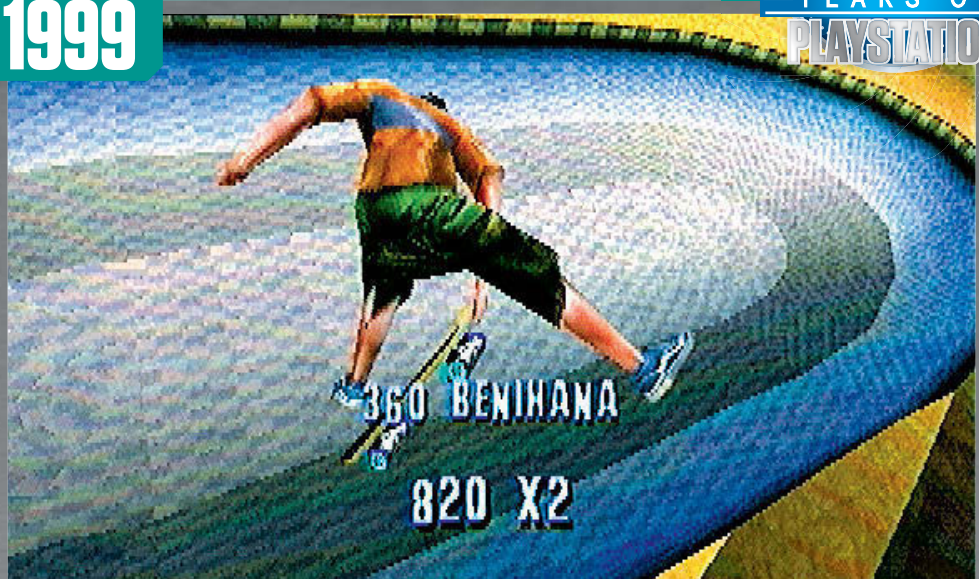
1998



△○×□ *GT's* replays were a marvel to behold thanks to enhanced graphics.

FOLLOWING A POUNDING at the hands of Sony's success and Nintendo's popularity, Sega's Saturn was discontinued this year but PlayStation, now the market leader, continued to go from strength to strength. High-profile sequels like *Resident Evil 2* and *Tekken 3* became franchise highlights while controversial PC hit *Grand Theft Auto* arrived on PSone. Games aimed squarely at the older end of the gaming market would only go on to become more common as PlayStation pulled gaming consoles out of their 'kiddy' pigeon hole. Games could also be more serious, as proven by *Gran Turismo* – a driving simulation (made all the better by analogue control and one of the first games to truly benefit from the DualShock) that did away with the usual arcade trappings of console racers to deliver realism both on and off the track, with real cars, an open-ended career structure and freedom over exactly how to modify your many cars. Needless to say, it was huge and to this day, *GT* remains Sony's best-selling franchise.

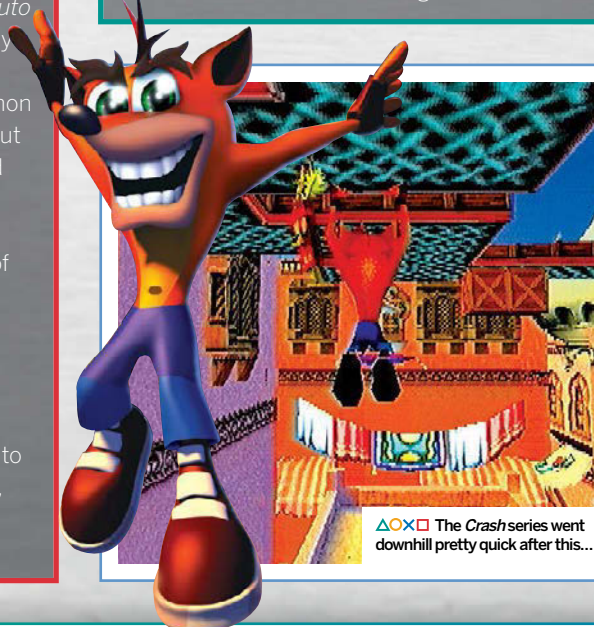
1999



"CINEMATIC EXPERIENCES HELPED THE PSONE HOLD DREAMCAST AT BAY"

THE ODDLY-SHAPED MONOLITH that was the PS2 may have been looming large on the horizon but that didn't stop Sony's first console from having another great year. Sega's Dreamcast arrived to steal Sony's crown as the home of arcade-perfect conversions but the huge established player base on PlayStation and shifting market focus from arcade-derivative games to

cinematic console experiences helped the PSone hold Dreamcast at bay. Breakout successes like *Syphon Filter*, *Driver*, *Silent Hill*, *Metal Gear Solid* and *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* certainly assisted with this, while the impressive WWII first-person shooter *Medal Of Honor* would go some way towards establishing the cinematic shooter template that most FPS games still use today.



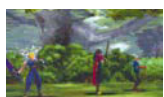
△○×□ The *Crash* series went downhill pretty quick after this...

MY PLAYSTATION MOMENT

Dom Peppiatt (Senior Staff Writer, games™)

CRASH BANDICOOT 3: WARPED

AS A KID, playing through *Crash 3* was amazing. It was the edgy choice of platformer when all the straight-A kids were playing *Mario*. But then, as I got older, I kept going back to the game and finding out more about it: from unlocking that bonus warp room, to getting 105 per cent, to completing each time trial's developer times, there was always a new challenge. And I'm *still* finding out more about now I've got it on Vita...



FINAL FANTASY VII

RELEASE: NOVEMBER 1997

One of the first games to show off all of the advantages of using CDs rather than cartridges, *FFVII* offered a huge world and over 100 hours of gameplay for those who wanted to see everything.



RESIDENT EVIL

RELEASE: AUGUST 1996

Utterly daft voice acting and a matching story actually helped lend a B-movie edge to Capcom's survival horror masterpiece – it just wouldn't be quite the same without that hammy edge, as the remake proves.



GRAN TURISMO

RELEASE: MAY 1998

While *WipeOut* shirked classic arcade racer rules to pursue the impossible, *Gran Turismo* went the opposite way to deliver realistic racing, cutting-edge visuals and cars that could be completely customised.

2000



△○×□ TimeSplitters was one of the few decent games at the PS2's launch.

NOT ONE BUT two new Sony consoles would launch this year – first, the streamlined and more affordable PSone model, followed soon after by the significantly more powerful PlayStation 2. The original console still enjoyed its fair share of impressive new releases on the eve of new hardware (and indeed beyond), from Neversoft's brilliant take on *Spider-Man* to the visually stunning epic that was *Fear Effect*. But it was the new hardware that stole the show at the end of the year, a sell-out success that smartly used DVD as a primary format, making it as much an investment in upgrading from VHS for movies as it was in a games console – at the time, the console was competitively priced against standalone DVD players, making it an affordable option for those looking to upgrade from chunky videos. Just as well too, as the PS2 launch lineup wasn't exactly stellar after years of PSone classics. *Tekken Tag Tournament* brought fighting bang up to date and *TimeSplitters* built on the multiplayer FPS craze *GoldenEye* started, but aside from a few neat newcomers like *SSX*, fans would largely have to wait until the following year to see what the new console could *really* do.

“THE PS2 LAUNCH LINEUP WASN'T EXACTLY STELLAR AFTER YEARS OF PSONE CLASSICS”

2001



△○×□ Dante's debut is still as good as ever...

BIZARRELY, SONY'S PRIMARY competition at this time actually came from itself – PSone continued to prove popular, the reduced price point of both console and games making it the perfect entry-level console and releases like *Dancing Stage* and *Simpsons Wrestling* really capitalising on this. For those who had upgraded, though, this was the year we first started to get a feel for the power of PS2. While the year dragged its feet a little, by the end we had the likes of *Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec*, *Silent Hill 2*, *Grand Theft Auto III*, *SSX Tricky*, *Devil May Cry*, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3*, *Soul Reaver 2* and *Burnout* to satisfy all our needs. Rockstar's release in particular is demanding of further recognition – transferring its crime caper from top-down 2D to full 3D was a huge undertaking and the game surprised everyone with its versatility, establishing the template for all modern open world games. Also, this was the year that Sony finally bought Naughty Dog, the studio behind the *Crash* games and later the awesome *Jak & Daxter* – arguably the platform holder's smartest investment to date.

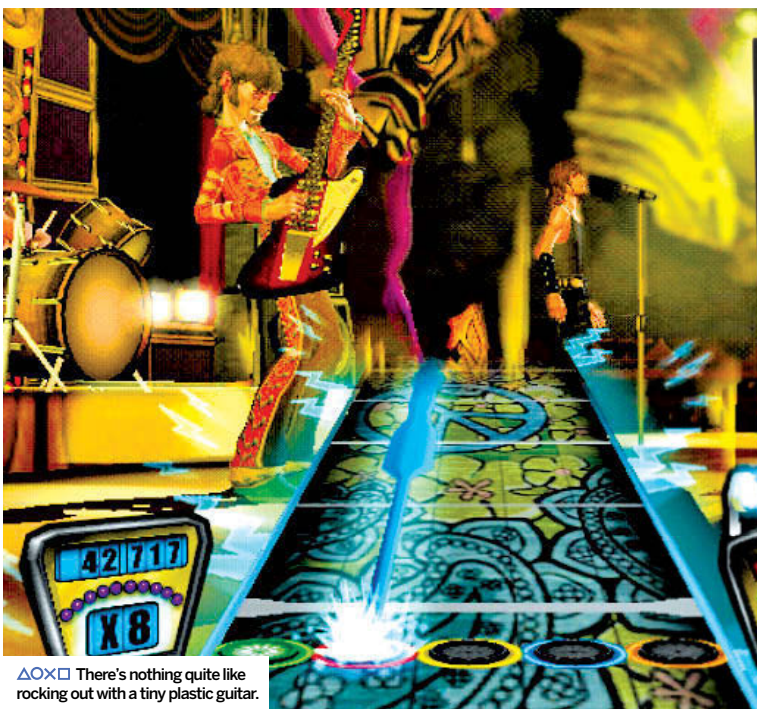
MY PLAYSTATION MOMENT

Luke Albigés (Editor, Play)

GUITAR HERO



I LOVED FREQUENCY and *Amplitude*, so when the studio behind those rhythm-action classics said it was making a guitar game, I was immediately on board. I imported the original game from the US at great expense (long before it was picked up for a European release) and it was worth every penny – that journey of working up from Medium to Hard and eventually Expert is one that will stay with me for life and something that helps me better appreciate every new music game that comes along. Only beating *Through The Fire And Flames* on Expert in *GHIII* has come close to that feeling of finally five-starring Ozzy's *Bark At The Moon* on Expert to round off the original game's setlist. I still remember the pain...



△○×□ There's nothing quite like rocking out with a tiny plastic guitar.



2002



THIS WOULD FINALLY be the year that PS2's real competition would arrive – Microsoft's debut, the Xbox, and Nintendo's first fully disc-based system, the GameCube. Despite being new to the market, Xbox presented a serious threat – effectively a more powerful, online-ready version of Sony's new machine – while Nintendo's decision to go with a proprietary smaller disc precluded it from playing DVDs or even audio CDs. Both would struggle to break Sony's stranglehold on gaming at this point anyway, especially given the strength of PS2's lineup of exclusives this year. *GTA: Vice City*, *Metal Gear Solid 2*, *Final Fantasy X*, *Kingdom Hearts*, *Sly Raccoon*... all only playable (at the time) on Sony's console, making it hard for the others to really break into the market in emphatic fashion, with the newly-introduced Platinum line for PS2 games only making matters that much tougher for the newcomers and their full-price catalogues.

2003



△○×□ No EyeToy game ever actually looked this good – the camera quality wasn't great.

AN INTERESTING YEAR, largely since it saw Sony fighting on two fronts – one trying to catch up with Microsoft in terms of online play and pushing family-friendly gaming, for better or worse. On the former front, Europe finally saw the Network Adapter, bolting itself onto the back of the console to make it an even stranger shape but allowing online play across a host of games including *EverQuest: Online Adventure*, the first true console MMO. Meanwhile, in an attempt to offer a gateway into gaming for families who only really bought a PS2 as an DVD player, Sony also launched the EyeToy, a camera that let players appear in and interact with games in a new way. This was also the year that several modern concepts were born – franchise fatigue (*Tomb Raider: Angel Of Darkness* was a game too far for many players) and design-by-committee, which saw *Jak & Daxter*'s sequel turn into a gritty open-world game in the vein of *GTA*.



“THE ABILITY TO HAVE A GTA GAME IN YOUR POCKET WAS TOO GOOD TO PASS UP FOR MANY”

PSP

Sony's first foray into handheld gaming was always going to have a hard time breaking into a market dominated for over a decade by Nintendo. But by offering console-quality games on the go, it's fair to say that the PSP carved a niche for itself away from what either the Game Boy and DS lines or mobile gaming could offer. The ability to have a proper *GTA* game in your pocket (you had pretty big pockets, right?) was too good to pass up for many, while PlayStation favourites like *WipEout*, *Ridge Racer* and *Tekken* were able to wow anew on this new platform. Even though its proprietary UMD format and high price point meant that it never really took off as Sony would have liked in the west, it was *huge* in Japan. In fact, the success of the *Monster Hunter* games in particular forged an entirely new genre of cooperative hunting games, which lives on thanks to the Vita and 3DS.

2004



AS PS2 CAME of age, those two diametrically opposed fronts only grew more so – *Singstar* played heavily to casual audiences by offering karaoke while the hardcore were offered online greatness thanks to *Star Wars Battlefront* and *Burnout 3* and classics like *GTA: San Andreas*, *Disgaea* and *Forbidden Siren*. But there was also a middle ground, namely the PS2 Slim – online-ready out of the box and equipped with all the same features and tech as its big brother, this model proved immensely popular. It wasn't all good news, though. We also saw PlayStation favourite *Driver* veer off course by somehow mixing up letters and numbers while failing to imitate *GTA* with *Driv3r*, while *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent* spat in the face of the N64 classic by delivering a story starring a spy with a *literal* golden eye. We also finally said goodbye to the PSone this year, its final release somewhat predictably a *FIFA* game.

PLAYSTATION 2'S DEFINING GAMES



GRAND THEFT AUTO III RELEASE: OCTOBER 2001

Laying out the template for every future sandbox game, Rockstar's surprise success would go on to influence not only this generation but every one that followed. One of the most important games of all time.



BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2004

Point Of Impact proved that Criterion could turn out a perfect arcade racer, but *Takedown* was the team's way of putting its own spin on the classic template by adding vehicular violence. Simply perfect.

MY PLAYSTATION MOMENT

Darran Jones (Editor, Retro Gamer)

OUT RUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST



IF I COULD only ever play one PS2 game for the rest of my life, it would be Sumo Digital's stunning sequel to *Out Run 2*.

Coast 2 Coast isn't really a new game as it's essentially a stunning port of both *Out Run 2* and its sequel *Out Run 2 SP*. However, the developer added enough new content to it to make it feel like its own unique game. The missions have been greatly expanded from those found in the original arcade game, while a large number of Ferraris were included too, ensuring there was plenty of reason to return to it. And I've been returning regularly for the last nine years. Just a truly stunning racer.



2005



△○× Snake Eater is still the best in the series in the eyes of many fans.

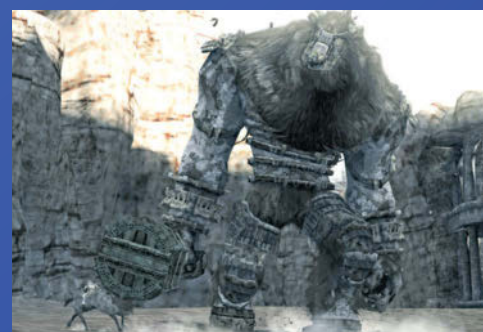
WITH SEVERAL OF the greatest games of all time releasing in the space of 12 months, it's safe to call 2005 another classic year. A pair of threequels in the form of *Metal Gear Solid 3* and *Devil May Cry 3* brought best-in-class performances while *God Of War* took spectacle to new heights with its gruesome take on Greek mythology. Capcom also dealt Nintendo's ailing GameCube yet another blow by porting *Resident Evil 4* to PS2, along with the strange *killer7*, plus Quantic Dream shot to fame with *Fahrenheit* – effectively an

interactive movie in a manner it would later refine with *Heavy Rain* and *Beyond: Two Souls*. After much speculation, this the year that we first saw the PSP, although it wasn't quite the overnight success Sony would have hoped for – high costs means that even though it offered console-standard gaming on the go, Nintendo would still not be budged from handheld dominance. The 360 also launched this year, but with over 100 million PS2s in the wild, Sony's dominance held strong in face of yet more powerful rivals.

2006



YOU'D THINK THAT delaying the PS2's successor until the following year (in Europe, at least) might have hurt the PS2 in terms of sales and support, but the truth couldn't be more different. In fact, this was the year that we'd see some all-time classics push the old hardware to its very limits. Never was this more true than in the case of *Shadow Of The Colossus*, an exceptional and emotional adventure but one that really highlighted just how much Sony's new machine needed to



hurry up and get here – you could practically hear the PS2 gasp for breath while trying to run the game and the same was true of several other key releases. Still, the likes of *Black*, *Kingdom Hearts II*, *Dragon Quest VIII* and *Guitar Hero* helped quell our next-gen blues, even if the E3 From Hell didn't help matters. Between the PS3's ludicrous price and the cringe-worthy game reveals, things weren't looking good for Sony catching up to Microsoft in the new console race...



PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2003

Since *Tomb Raider* took the grid-based platforming of the original *Prince Of Persia*, Ubisoft did brilliantly to reclaim its idea, complete with a novel time-bending mechanic to mitigate failure.



GOD OF WAR

RELEASE: JULY 2005

Few games set the stage better for the modern 'showpiece' game than Sony Santa Monica's Ancient Greek epic. It's just one highlight after another and the amazing set-pieces just keep on coming.



METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

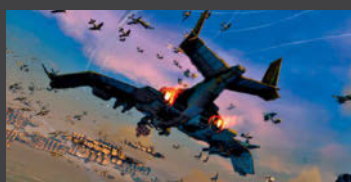
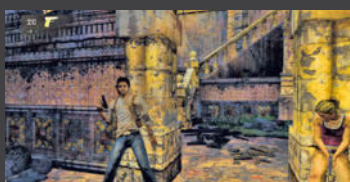
RELEASE: MARCH 2005

Disappointed by *MGS2*? Konami returned to form with *Snake Eater*, an ambitious and impressive evolution of the classic *MGS* formula that remains a series standout for many fans.

2007



△○×□ Who'd have thought this guy would become the face of PlayStation?



THE FIRST YEAR of the PlayStation 3's life is a pretty famous low for Sony – between the high console price, limited catalogue of games and exclusives and hardware failure issues with earlier models, it's no wonder a lot of people either stuck with their PS2s (which was still enjoying great support with the likes of *God Of War II*, *Persona 3* and *Odin Sphere*) or moved across to either the Xbox 360 or family-friendly Wii. It was just a bleak year for first-party PS3 titles, but amid the trickle of half-decent stuff like *Heavenly Sword* and *MotorStorm* (as well as a solid showing for one Nathan Drake in his debut, *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*), one game did manage to make a positive impression, namely *Warhawk*. With MS charging for online play, this offered epic online combat for just the up-front price of the game and it developed a large player base. It wasn't so much the game itself that captured the imagination for many, rather the fact that it demonstrated would online gaming should be – fast, frantic and fun, and without having to jump through hoops. The same could be seen in *Modern Warfare*, turning a good series into a *great* one and setting the scene for the online landscape we know and love today.

2008



AT LAST, THE exclusives started to arrive, and they didn't come much bigger than *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots*. Up to this point, no one game had really offered enough incentive for people to buy a new PlayStation console, but Kojima's story-driven opus was just one of many this year – *LittleBigPlanet* took us to creative platforming paradise, an enhanced *SingStar* turned PS3 into a family-friendly karaoke machine, *Valkyria Chronicles* secured the hardcore vote with its superb strategic action, *Resistance 2* vastly improved on the FPS combat of the original and *Haze*... well, *Haze* is a game that came out. It was a great year for third-party support too, both in terms of playing catch-up to the 360 library and in terms of new releases. *Dead Space*, *GTA IV*, *Mirror's Edge*, *Rock Band*, *Fallout 3*, *BioShock*... the list goes on and even if you only bought a PS3 for one of those cool new exclusives, you certainly wouldn't have struggled for other great things to play on it. This was also the year that Trophies were first introduced, offering a streamlined take on Microsoft's Achievements system that let players track and compare progress across multiple titles.



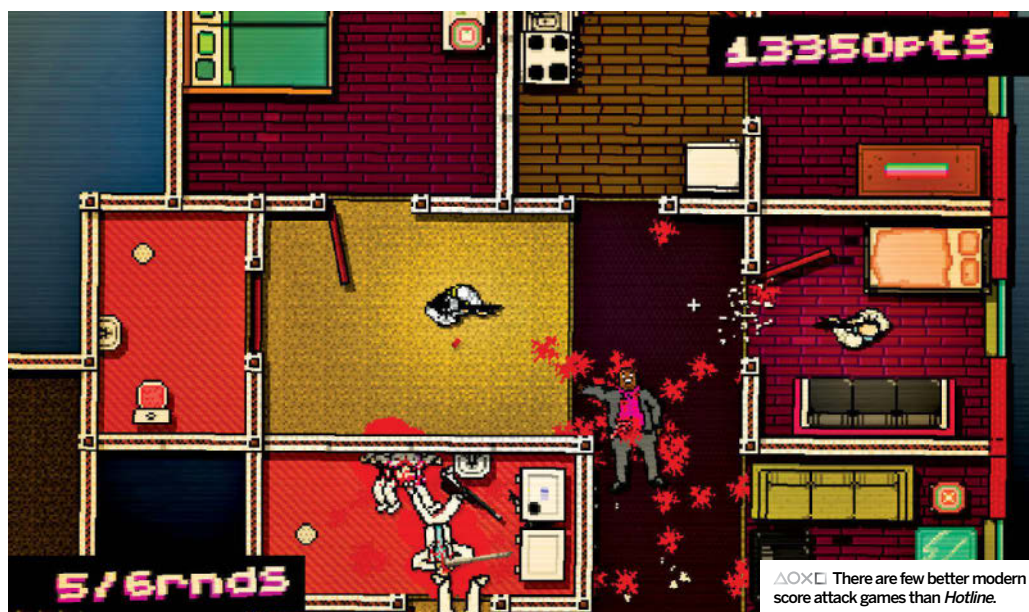
MY PLAYSTATION MOMENT

Paul Walker-Emig (Senior Staff Writer, Play)

HOTLINE MIAMI



HOTLINE MIAMI IS one of the best action games I've ever played. Not only is it near-flawless in terms of its intense combat, it is also incredibly stylish *and* has one of the best soundtracks in videogames, its Eighties-themed electronic tunes perfectly matching both the era in which it is set, and the trance-like experience of playing the game. Add to that its intelligent and self-reflexive story and you've got an incredible game. If you ever wonder why Sony's increasing interest in indie developers over recent years is a good thing, then *Hotline Miami* is your answer.



△○×□ There are few better modern score attack games than *Hotline*.

2009



△OX△ Thanks to *Arkham Asylum*, pretty much every modern action game has the same combat system.



IT'S SAFE TO go ahead and call this the Year Of The Comeback. Batman, after years of turgid movie licenses, finally punched his way back into gaming relevance with the outstanding *Arkham Asylum*; *Street Fighter*, after a decade away, returned to consoles and sent the 2D fighter screaming back into popularity; even *FIFA*, after several years of stagnation, at last managed to steal the footy title away from a struggling Konami with its strongest showing in memory. Sony itself would stage the first part of its own comeback, too. *Killzone 2*,

“UNCHARTED 2 CAME BLASTING ONTO THE SCENE”

while not quite up to the standard of *that* E3 video, balanced great visuals and tight, weighty gunplay to make it a series worth caring about, *inFamous* made its debut, timed perfectly to capitalise on the love for open world games after *GTA IV*, *Assassin's Creed* and *Fallout 3* and a new slim PS3 model made the machine more affordable (and desirable – it's a way nicer-looking console). Just in time, too – *Uncharted 2* came blasting onto the scene with incredible cut-scenes, cutting edge-visuals and perfect gameplay. Naughty Dog barging its way to the front of the queue for the Game Of The Generation award!



MY PLAYSTATION MOMENT

Liam Warr (Designer, Play)

THE LAST OF US



WHAT IS PROBABLY the most captivating story I've ever had the pleasure of playing, *The Last Of Us* defined the PS3 generation even with its late arrival. Zombie modes became increasingly popular throughout the lifespan of the PlayStation 3 and Naughty Dog showcased some of the best character design the world had seen with its Runners, Clickers and Bloaters. Combine this with the stunning overgrown and abandoned landscapes throughout the game and the gripping story of two of Sony's most beloved characters now and it all adds up to one of the greatest videogame experiences ever produced.



△○×□ One of the best games on PS3 and PS4. Cheers, Naughty Dog!

2010

RELEASING A LITTLE too late (especially considering that the Wii bubble had already started to deflate a little at this point), PlayStation Move was this year's oddity. The tech was great – way more accurate than Nintendo's alternative – but without any real killer apps, it was EyeToy all over again. Gimmicks, party games and simplified sports were pretty much all we got but hey, options are never a bad thing. And it's not like core gamers were left wanting, either – *God Of War III* stunned players with its insane visuals and graphic violence, *Demon's Souls* laid the groundwork for the *Souls* series of today thanks to From

Software's emphasis on challenge and ingenious online features, while *Heavy Rain* (later re-released with Move support, which actually made it worse) introduced many to the idea of a branching narrative and gave meme hunters plenty of fuel in the process. Also of note was the launch of PlayStation Plus, Sony's subscription service offering free games, early beta access and exclusive discounts to members. Oh, and there was that embarrassing little slip-up at the end of February, where older PS3 consoles thought that 2010 was a leap year and couldn't be used online at all for a day while console and server argued about what the date was...

“DEMON'S SOULS LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE SOULS SERIES THANKS TO FROM SOFTWARE'S EMPHASIS ON CHALLENGE”



△○×□ Quantic Dream refined its interactive fiction structure with *Heavy Rain*, still its best game.



△○×□ Expect to see Move make a comeback when PlayStation VR arrives...



PLAYSTATION 3'S DEFINING GAMES



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

RELEASE: OCTOBER 2009

It was a toss-up between this and *The Last Of Us*, but we'd argue that Drake's second outing was slightly more important for the trajectory and success of PS3 due to when it arrived.



CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2007

Every shooter owes something to Infinity Ward's FPS. Rewriting the rulebook on what an online suite should offer and doing so with the series' tight shooting, *COD4* remains the series' finest hour.

PS VITA

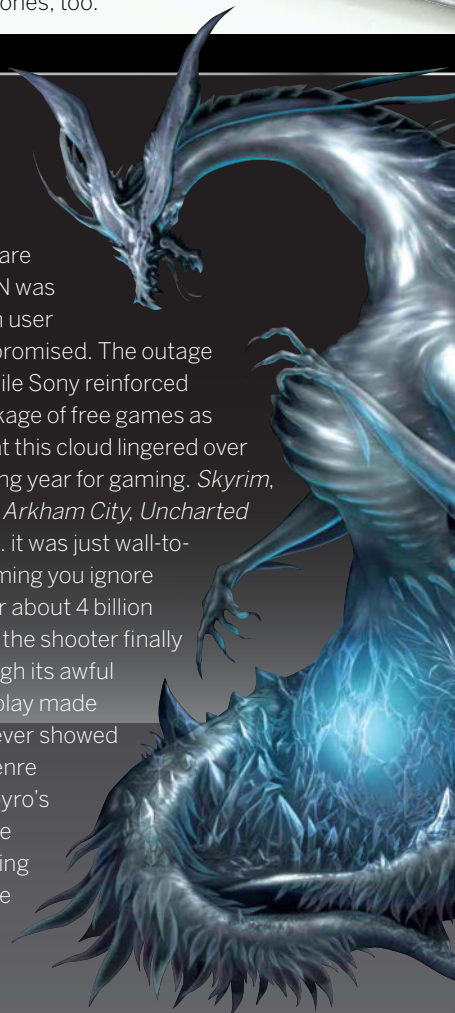
The sad truth about Vita is that there simply isn't much of a market for home-standard videogames on a portable platform. Everyone has a phone that can run decent games (and F2P time-wasters), so the need for a bespoke gaming handheld doesn't exist like it did back when the Game Boy rose to power. It's a shame, because Vita is an amazing piece of kit capable of pumping out incredible graphics and delivering new gameplay experiences. Don't believe the bullshit, either – it has loads of great games and is still getting awesome new ones, too.



2011

SONY JUST COULDN'T

seem to catch a break no matter how good its software support was – in April, PSN was hacked and over 70 million user accounts potentially compromised. The outage lasted roughly a month while Sony reinforced its security, offering a package of free games as compensation. It's sad that this cloud lingered over what was otherwise a strong year for gaming. *Skyrim*, *Dark Souls*, *Mass Effect 2*, *Arkham City*, *Uncharted 3*, *Dead Space 2*, *Portal 2*... it was just wall-to-wall greatness. Well, assuming you ignore *Duke Nukem Forever*. After about 4 billion years in development hell, the shooter finally made it onto shelves, though its awful graphics and dated gameplay made most people wish it had never showed up at all. The toys-to-life genre was also born this year, Spyro's radical makeover giving the world *Skylanders* and forcing parents to concoct creative excuses as to why their kids didn't need all those shiny new toys.



2012



THIS SEEMED TO be something of a tech-centric year for Sony, which proved especially interesting with rumours of a new console bubbling away furiously. There was yet another new PS3 model in the budget Super Slim, the launch of PSP's successor, Vita, and news that Sony had acquired streaming specialists Gaikai for almost \$400 million. That last point made waves at the time as nobody was really sure why (we know now that this is the tech behind services like Remote Play and PlayStation Now) but none of this could detract from another strong year for PS3. Indies really started to come to the forefront this year, with the likes of *Journey* and *The Walking Dead* sitting alongside heavy-hitters like *Borderlands 2*, *Far Cry 3*, *XCOM* and *Mass Effect 3* in Game Of The Year shortlists. As the rumour mill churned out possibilities about what a new generation might bring, Nintendo actually got off the starting blocks first – Wii U launched late this year but with confusing branding and marketing and a weak catalogue, Sony didn't look to have much to fear from Nintendo.



STREET FIGHTER IV RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2009

True to its roots yet with enough new features and characters to win over a whole new generation, Capcom proved with *SFIV* that it could still turn out killer sequels even if recent *Resident Evil* games suggested otherwise.



DARK SOULS RELEASE: OCTOBER 2011

Demon's Souls is responsible for establishing the formula but *Dark Souls* is the game where gameplay and combat caught up to vision and creativity. Challenging, rewarding and daunting in equal measure, it's just a must-play game.



BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM RELEASE: AUGUST 2009

There are arguments to be made that *City* is the better game than *Asylum*. But after turning around the Bat's standing in gaming, *Asylum* is the game responsible for guiding Batman back to the gaming elite.

2013

ALTHOUGH PLAYSTATION 4 would not arrive until November, Sony's console announcement conference earlier in the year meant that all new PS3 games would end up emerging from the shadow of the new machine. Such was the strength of the announcement and potential lineup that most eyes were already looking to the future, although to do that would have been to miss some great games as PS3 wound up. *The Last Of Us* and *GTA V* saw the old hardware pushed to its very limits and proved there'd still be life in the console even when PS4 strolled into town – hell, PS2 games were still coming out, the last of which (*PES 2014*) actually got released *this very year*. PS4 launch day finally rolled around and after many high-profile delays, there wasn't much to see in terms of exclusives. *Resogun* was (and is) amazing, while *Killzone* was a great graphical showcase with tight multiplayer. Still, boasting the best versions of most cross-platform releases, PS4 managed a way stronger start than its forerunner, and the best was yet to come...

2014



△×□ *Destiny* is our most-played game of this generation so far...

AS MORE AND more big games suffered delays, it became increasingly apparent that developers really must have underestimated the amount of work that goes into making a polished triple-A game in this day and age. Between rough releases like *Thief* and Konami releasing a small slice of *Metal Gear Solid V* as *The Phantom Pain* in order to tide fans over to the real deal, we clearly had a year of ports, remasters and delays on our hands. A few original titles – *inFamous: Second Son*, among others – were there to fill the gaps left by all the delays. But even games like *Destiny*, with its lack of content at launch, meant that sometimes, playing enhanced versions of older games might just be the better option. Not that we ever need an excuse to go back to *Final Fantasy XIV* or *Diablo III* but hey, at least that option was there.

PLAYSTATION 4'S DEFINING GAMES



BLOODBORNE RELEASE: MARCH 2015

The first example of a game worth buying a console for this generation. Evolving the *Souls* series' combat and grim setting, this is arguably From's best work. And with that new expansion out any day, it looks like we'll be heading back to Yharnam.



DESTINY RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2014

It might not have had the strongest of launches but with each expansion, *Destiny* edges closer to true greatness. *The Taken King* reinvents the game brilliantly and leaves us with high hopes for future content.

2015



△×× We were pleasantly surprised by how good MKX turned out. DLC model aside, it's a cracking fighter.

AND LO, THE floodgates finally opened. *Bloodborne* kicked us off in style, followed closely by greats like *Mortal Kombat X*, *Batman: Arkham Knight* and *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. In June, Sony went absolutely nuts at E3, making dreams come true with announcements like the *FFVII* remake and

Shenmue 3 and the re-reveal of *The Last Guardian*. It was just ridiculous. And in case you hadn't noticed, the year's not even done yet. Before 2016 lands, there are even more huge games on the way, from *Call Of Duty: Black Ops III* to *Star Wars Battlefront*. Another great year, all things considered...

2016 & BEYOND



WE DON'T NEED to dedicate all that much space here to the future of PlayStation, since that's what the majority of this magazine is for. 2016 is going to be insane, and Q1 in particular will be extremely expensive. *Uncharted 4*, *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided*, *Far Cry Primal*, *Street Fighter V*, *The Division*... all looking great and all mere months away now. There's also something big to look forward to on the tech side of things, with PlayStation VR likely to make a splash if Sony can get the price right and hit the mass market with it. The big question, though, is this: how the hell will Sony be able to top E3 2015?

MY PLAYSTATION MOMENT

Drew Sleep (Production Editor, Play)

BLOODBORNE



I'VE BRAVED THE Spencer mansion, I've unravelled Ultimicia's Time Kompression, I've slain colossi, damned The Patriots and I've delivered a bullet to Marlene's face. All of these legendary achievements, right? While all of these moments are now in my forever locked in my nostalgic Hall Of Fame, another has recently joined their ranks: finishing the Paleblood Hunt. What I love about *Bloodborne* is that it's a hunter's game in every way: you hunt for power, you hunt for your weapons and gear, you hunt for the survival and you hunt for the game's story. It's fantastic. Also, f**k you, Vicar Amelia.



THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT

RELEASE: MAY 2015

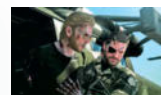
With one of the biggest open worlds we've ever had the joy of exploring and a constant trickle of content, CD Projekt Red has really raised the bar for how open-ended RPGs should be done.



RESOGUN

RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2014

Some saw the fact that an indie game was the console's best game on day one to be a joke, but we've always seen it as a positive. A great game is a great game regardless of where it comes from and *Resogun* is brilliant.



METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN

RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2015

While elements of the game might not sit well with everyone, few would argue that the game is not a masterpiece when it comes to general gameplay. *MGSV* has defined stealth for years to come.

Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection

Sic Parvis Magna



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Sony
DEVELOPER
Naughty Dog/Bluepoint
PSN PRICE
£49.99
PLAYERS
1
AGE RATING
16+
TWITTER
@Naughty_Dog

Trophies 166



IT SEEMS LIKE a perfect combination: the trilogy of games that made Naughty Dog one of the most critically lauded studios in the world and the kings of the remaster in Bluepoint games. For the most part, it is, though that doesn't mean that there's nothing wrong with *The Nathan Drake Collection*.

Let's start off by saying that the visual enhancements Bluepoint has made to the *Uncharted* trilogy are fantastic. Textures are more detailed, lighting is vastly improved and, at 1080p resolution, you can really see the difference that the visual tweaks have made. Whether in the thick foliage of a forest broken up by shards of light breaking through the canopy, or city streets littered with rubble and grime,

the already beautiful *Uncharted* games look better than ever before.

As you'd expect, the difference is most pronounced in the first two *Uncharted* games. The second hits something of sweet spot in that Bluepoint is working from a better technical base than with the first

character models, making them look a bit like plastic. Along with the higher resolution, improved textures, lighting, and so on, all games in the collection run at a perfectly smooth 60fps.

However, we have to stop short of saying that the collection is perfect from a technical perspective. While

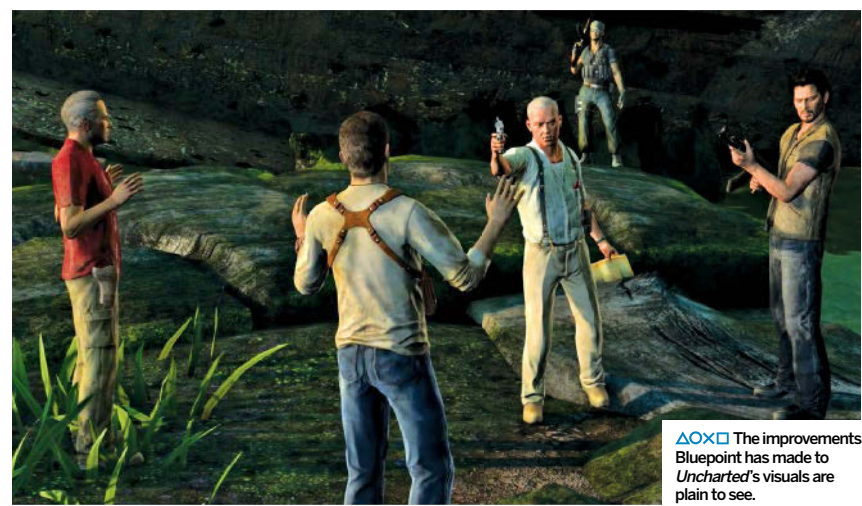
we do not wish to understate the fantastic job Bluepoint has done with the *Uncharted* trilogy on the whole, we have to mention that we did notice some minor issues. In *Uncharted 2*,

“BLUEPOINT HAS DONE A GOOD JOB OF MAKING COMBAT MORE CONSISTENT ACROSS THE THREE GAMES”

game, but there is more room for improvement than with *Uncharted 3*, meaning that it is the best game in the series which ends up grabbing your attention in terms of its technical improvements. *Uncharted 3* still takes obvious steps forward, save for the fact that there's something off with its

there was an instance where a guard that was meant to be sitting suddenly teleported into a standing position in mid-air. In *Uncharted 3*, we somehow climbed *through* a wall to be confronted with the kind of ugly geometry that anyone who has ever bugged outside a stage in a videogame will be familiar with. We also spotted a few small animation glitches. None of these problems were game-breaking (even the *Uncharted 3* incident was resolved by climbing back through the wall), nor would we say they were frequent. However, when we're evaluating a remaster like this, where our focus is primarily on the quality of the remaster itself, it needs to be acknowledged that you might encounter some problems that weren't there in the original games.

And while our focus is on the remaster, rather than the games per se, we also feel that it's worth mentioning that in some ways the *Uncharted*



ΔΟΧΔ The improvements Bluepoint has made to *Uncharted's* visuals are plain to see.



ΔOXO That's right, Nate, just lend Sully your notebook for a minute. It's not like he's about to get shot or anything...



NEW WAYS TO PLAY

There are no major new modes, but Bluepoint has added a couple of neat extras...

EXPLORER

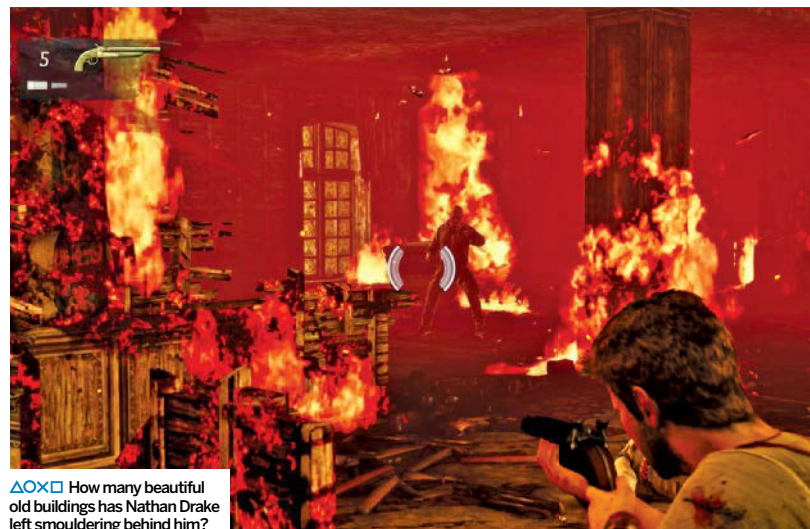
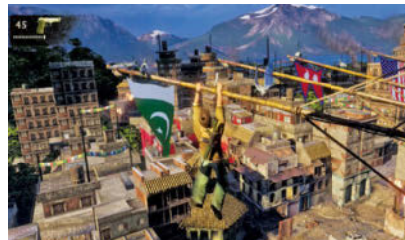
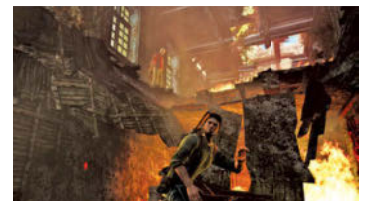
Explorer mode has been added for players who are more interested in the experience, rather than challenge, dramatically reducing combat difficulty.

BRUTAL

On the other end of the scale from Explorer Mode is a new Brutal difficulty that is unlocked after finishing a game on Crushing. We'll give that one a miss, thanks.

SPEED RUN

All three *Uncharted* games now have a new Speed Run mode. This mode makes it much easier to track and compare your times with friends.



ΔOXO How many beautiful old buildings has Nathan Drake left smouldering behind him?

games do show their age. In truth, they were never *great* shooters, but that's become even more apparent in returning to them. Weapons feel as if they lack impact, getting in and out of cover can be fiddly and there's a general sense of sloppiness to the gunplay. Bluepoint has done a good job of making combat more consistent across the three games, but that was never going to remedy that fact that it wasn't all that in the first place. Combat is not *bad*, but you might find that it's not quite as good as you remember.

Even with caveats about *Uncharted's* combat, these are still fantastic games. Even *without* the visual improvements Bluepoint has made, they've got some of the best set-pieces in games, excellent pacing, showcase Naughty Dog's unparalleled dialogue and characterisation, and capture the spirit

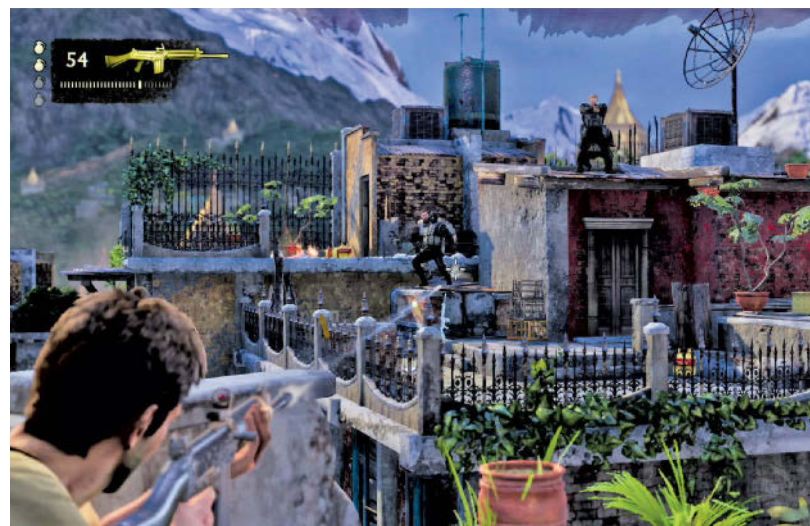
of adventure that *Uncharted* has always been reaching for. In that respect alone, having the three legendary titles collated in one package represents great value for money. Add to that the substantial technical improvements in terms of frame-rates and visuals and the argument that *The Nathan Drake Collection* is the best way to return to this classic PlayStation series makes itself.

Paul Walker-Emig

VERDICT

It has some minor technical problems, but the care that Bluepoint has put into *The Nathan Drake Collection* makes it clear that this is far more than a rudimentary cash-in.

 PlayMag_UK scored **8** for *Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection*
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE





Transformers: Devastation

More than meets the eye



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Activision

DEVELOPER

PlatinumGames

PRICE

£39.99

PLAYERS

1

AGE RATING

12+

TWITTER

@platinumgames

Trophies 31



ALSO ON PS3

FOR PLAYERS OF a certain age, *Devastation* is an absolute dream come true. It looks like the original G1 cartoon and sounds like it as well (by virtue of the fact that most voice actors reprise their roles, although it's lacking the original theme and music), with gameplay handled by the same team that gave us *Bayonetta* and *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance*. And while the mid-price release gives some indication of what to expect in terms of the amount of content, it also massively undersells the level of quality and authenticity displayed by this superb action game.

Falling somewhere between the flow of *Bayonetta* and the weight and purpose of *Revengeance* with a splash of *Vanquish* thrown in for good measure, moment-to-moment combat is slick, satisfying and sensational. The transformation mechanic feels – arguably for the first time ever in a *Transformers* game – like it actually serves a purpose... several, in fact. Combos can be ended with powerful vehicular attacks (which themselves can often lead to follow-ups), or you can use

the smaller frame and quicker movement of the vehicle form to escape larger, more telegraphed incoming attacks. The latter isn't quite true for Prime (being a truck, he's a little on the slow side) nor for Grimlock, but the Dinobot is a law unto himself. Dinosaur form has its own set of attacks meaning that you can create seamless combos that switch between the two modes, though his lack of pace makes him better suited for skilled players. Oh, and wrestling fans – following a successful dodge or parry,

versions of attacks between characters and vehicular versatility (as often seen in character-specific special moves) is pretty awesome, while most weapon types are limited to a portion of the cast. These are received via random drops, a simple yet enjoyable loot system slapping various perks and stats on melee and ranged weapons, which can be fused and improved in order to get the perks you want on the gear you want it on. As you rise through the difficulty levels, you'll feel slightly at the mercy of this system

“FALLS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE FLOW OF BAYONETTA AND THE WEIGHT AND PURPOSE OF REVENGEANCE”

Grimlock can perform piledrivers and other grapple attacks on smaller foes for score bonuses, but he's the only playable character who can do so.

There's a fair amount of variety between each of the five Autobots despite what is effectively a universal moveset – even the same basic command performs slightly different

at times (especially if you can't seem to get good weapons to drop) but with plenty of ways to boost drop rates, you shouldn't have to go too long without seeing A, S or even SS rank gear. Just be ready to change things up should you unlock something in the next tier up – the difference is staggering and it's worth relearning your combos for extra damage.



△OX□ You'll get kicked around on Magnus difficulty, sure. But that only makes finally overcoming the challenge all the sweeter.



Coming in at just five-to-six hours across seven chapters, things like the character progression system and loot system are essential in supporting the basic act of climbing the difficulty ladder to create longevity – as long as you aren't averse to replaying chapters multiple times, there's actually a fair bit to see and do here. Warrior difficulty is pitched pretty well (the easier Scout mode is only really there for youngsters and *Transformers* fans who don't really do character action games) and Commander is best tackled after at least a partial run on a lower setting to fully learn the mechanics, as it doesn't pull many punches. But that's important, as it prepares you for the pair of unlockable difficulties where, in true Platinum style, every hit hurts like hell and getting sloppy or greedy will almost always get you killed. Still, with

△OX□ The tone of the original cartoon has been perfectly captured, right down to some of the quirks of Eighties animation.

the cruel enemy placement of Magnus and Prime modes comes the prospect of better loot. It's also worth mentioning that level design, while guilty of a few too many A-to-B strolls between fights, does promote exploration and replay with optional missions found out of the way that contribute to your overall level rank.

Bosses represent a clear highlight and each has its own set of patterns and gimmicks to learn – with the original series' composer on hand to back them up with rocking themes, the best of these are memorable showdowns. Learning them is also key to tackling the Challenge mode, which likes to throw them around in new scenarios and sometimes even in pairs. It can get messy but there are some neat ideas among the repurposed stuff, and it's another way of extending the life of what is otherwise a short game.

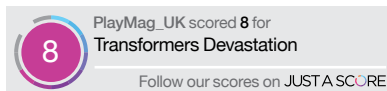


A small slice of succulent steak (or suitably delicious vegetarian alternative, if you'd rather) it may be, but between rock-solid combat, slick presentation and an unwavering respect for its source material, *Devastation* is classic Platinum. *Transformers* fans can basically add two points to the score, but even those who aren't so fond of robots in disguise will struggle to deny its quality.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

An excellent game that manages to make up for its lack of content with great mechanics and superb presentation, *Devastation* is Platinum doing what Platinum does best.



Rock Band 4

A solid opening to a potentially incredible set



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Mad Catz

DEVELOPER
Harmonix

PRICE
From £49.99

PLAYERS
1-6

AGE RATING
12+

TWITTER
@Harmonix

Trophies 51



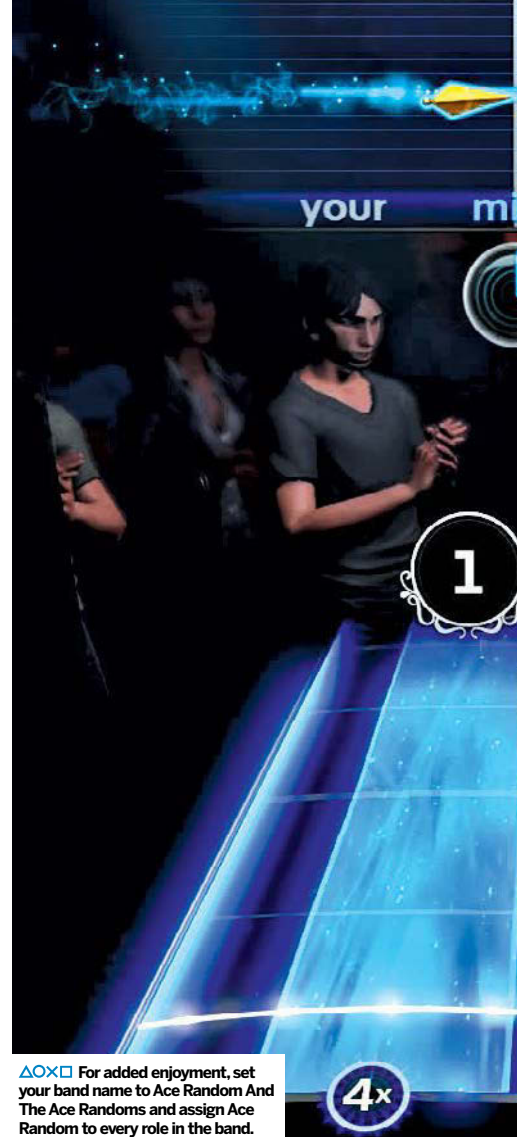
PICTURE THE SCENE:

you get really into a new band, obsess over the first few albums, gather your friends to hit up shows up and down the country and fill your house with merch. But then one day, the scene falls apart and the band disappears almost overnight. You cling to the dream, still rocking out to the old albums and adding clicks to a seemingly defunct YouTube channel in the vague hope that the band will resurface. Eventually, they miraculously do, striding back onto the scene with the original lineup and everything. Overcome with joy, you count down the minutes until the first comeback show but when the fateful hour finally comes, you wind up leaving a little underwhelmed. The magic's just not there any more, and the band almost seems to have forgotten some of its best material. Well, that group is the imaginatively-named *Rock Band*, and *RB4* is that somewhat disappointing homecoming show – as much as it still may have the power to entertain, there's simply something missing right now. Well, quite a few things, actually.

It was to be expected without the backing of a major publisher, but fun as it is, *Rock Band 4* lacks a fair bit of the functionality of the last few games. Pro

Guitar and Keyboards likely won't be missed by many but for those few who spent several hundred quid just to use them in one game, their removal will be a real disappointment. Similarly, online play – while far from the focus of what is primarily a local party game – is sadly absent at launch, making get-togethers the only way to play with friends. Training mode is gone too, with No-Fail Mode a crude replacement for getting your head around tricky patterns or breakdowns, and *RB3*'s drum lessons will be missed by those struggling to break out of Medium purgatory on the tubs. And while we can't fault Harmonix's Herculean effort to get old DLC and instruments working on a new platform, it's still a shame that some plastic friends are no longer with us and a lot of the music catalogue (particularly imported setlists from previous disc-based games) still hasn't shown up. Much of this is, we're assured, coming at some point down the line, but that promise doesn't alter the fact that in its launch state, *Rock Band 4* seems incredibly bare-bones.

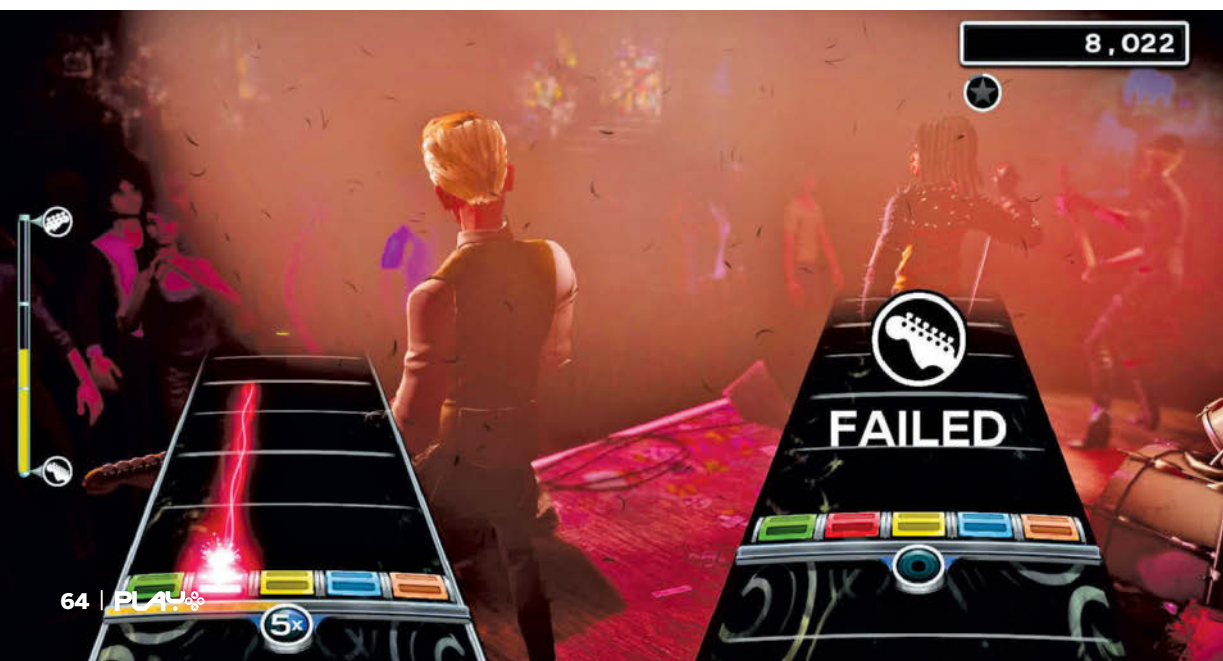
What is there, however, is pretty much as good as it has ever been. Gameplay additions are few and generally quite divisive. The freestyle guitar solos, for instance, are fantastic in theory and fun to mess around with, for sure. With a little



AOX For added enjoyment, set your band name to *Ace Random And The Ace Randoms* and assign *Ace Random* to every role in the band.

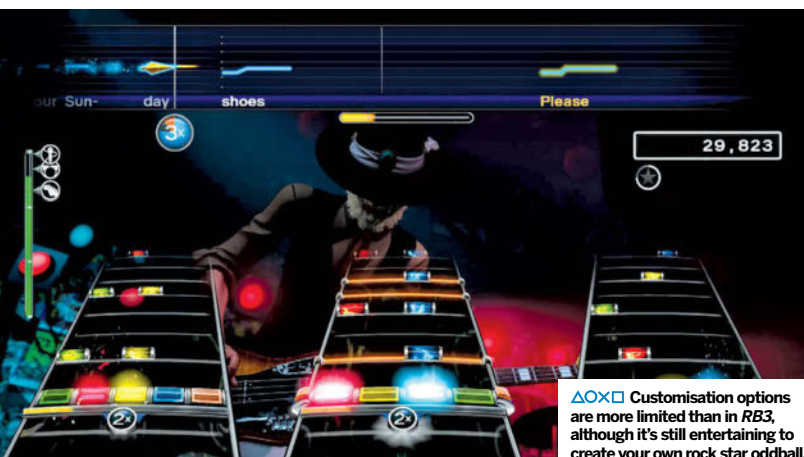
time on your own with a song, you can actually create some awesome-sounding fills and licks. But in *Rock Band*'s natural habitat – a rowdy party environment – few players will have the skill to cook up something that works that well on the fly and the resultant overpowering cacophony (while still technically in key) ends up being an unwelcome distraction for other players, especially in tricky songs where other instruments fit around the original solo. Drum fills too have been overhauled, though the default Dynamic Fills option has a nasty habit of throwing awkward patterns into songs that really don't want or need them. Fortunately, in the case of both solos and fills, alternatives exist if the new ones don't go down well with the band, meaning scripted solos and freeform fills are still available (and arguably preferable).

The one big change we can't knock is to vocals, granting singers the opportunity to express themselves when playing on Hard or higher. Credit is now given for ad-libbing in key and singing your own parts or harmonies as well as for doing it by the book. Songs you once ruled out for mic duty due to one or two tricky high notes



nd and soul

“FUN AS IT IS, ROCK BAND 4 LACKS A FAIR BIT OF THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE LAST FEW GAMES”



△○× Customisation options are more limited than in *RB3*, although it's still entertaining to create your own rock star oddball.

suddenly come back onto the menu – rather than busting a gut trying to keep up with Freddie, offer your own take on a melody and you'll still contribute to the band's performance.

In having to avoid overlap with previous games and the vast DLC catalogue, Harmonix has effectively forced itself into turning in its weakest on-disc setlist to date. It's also the most eclectic, however, meaning those with broad music tastes are likely to find new bands to get into and some great songs to play. As usual, there are a fair few tracks that you might not expect to work in the game that end up being great fun to play on particular instruments, while a handful of others suffer from weak charting that makes them arbitrarily tougher than they should be. Outside of the fixed playlists in the entertaining Tour mode, the option to select and play multiple songs has been replaced with a voting system that lets the band select the next song on-the-fly. It's cool in theory and generally works, but it's not without its quirks – having one stubborn person dodge the general consensus and get their way can be frustrating (particularly if the singer

doesn't know the chosen track) and some of the options presented are just plain bizarre. Literally nobody has, when asked what they'd like to play next, responded with 'a song from 1987'.

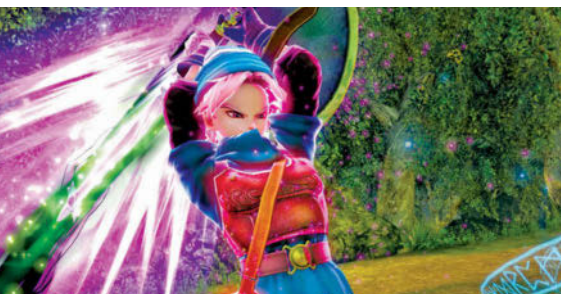
Ultimately, *Rock Band* is still the same outstanding party game it has always been, but the experience is marred by the absence of a slew of features that fans of the series have come to expect. It's like seeing Kiss play a gig with practice amps in a run-down shed – the core element is great, as always, but it's just lacking in some key areas. Give Harmonix a few months/years to layer on the facepaint, hire a huge stadium and stack the amps high, though, and this could yet be something truly special.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Even with the lack of features, *Rock Band 4* is still as fun as the series has ever been with friends. Expect the score to rise as Harmonix comes good with updates and new content...

 PlayMag_UK scored 7 for *Rock Band 4*
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



△○×□ Getting to 'High Tension' and then unleashing your special attack is actually very rewarding.



Dragon Quest Heroes

Are you ready for this jelly?



THIS IS THE best *Warriors* game that's come out in the last five years. There's no question about that. For us PS3/PS4 players that didn't get chance to experience *Hyrule Warriors* (Wii U), we've not really seen what a *Warriors* style game outside of *Dynasty Warriors* and *Samurai Warriors* has to offer, right? *The One Piece* games don't count – being made on a budget doesn't give you any excuse for being, you know, not good – but this one... well, this one was made with love.

Don't get us wrong – it still has its drawbacks, but if you're going into an Omega Force game, you kind of know what to expect. Yes, you're going to be hammering Square without question, yes, you're going to be dispatching endless waves of foes, and yes, you're going to sit through a bad story. But *Dragon Quest Heroes* manages to throw a few extras into the slimy mix

that spice things up *just enough* to make it more noticeable than its Koei Tecmo peers.

The game trades on its similarity to the parent *Dragon Quest* games; there's a pseudo-RPG system tucked under the skin of the game that actually makes you want to jump into the picturesque fantasy-Medieval stylings of the game's world to grind. For a *Warriors* game, that's rare: we played this game for the progression, not just the mindless killing. There's also the a nod to the series' monster recruitment that comes in the form of in-battle buffs: fulfil certain criteria and you can recruit minion-level or boss-level monsters to your side – some buff you, some debuff enemies, some act as walking turrets and some have a powerful one-use ability you can burn whenever. This actually makes the battles a lot more fun: it turns out popping a giant Cyclops in the middle of an enemy squad is something that breathes a bit of life into the endless horde combat, after all.

Riffing on a series that's been going since 1986 means *Dragon Quest Heroes* can bring in a whole heap of fan-service, from the supporting characters of *Dragon Quest IV* and *Dragon Quest VI* to the British sidekicks of the main protagonist from *Dragon Quest VIII*, Jessica and Yangus. The story is... passable, but focuses on making you laugh over making you care – a wise choice. Brimming with fan-service and knowing nods to the parent series, you were never going to get a decent story, but hey, it's entertaining: a Sunday

DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Square Enix

DEVELOPER

Omega Force

PSN PRICE

£39.99

PLAYERS

1

AGE RATING

3+

TWITTER

@DragonQuest

Trophies 50



△○×□ The level design might leave a lot to be desired, but hey – at least it's easy enough to read.



△×□ The attack effects easily overtake *Dynasty Warriors*.



PLAY CHALLENGE



SHARE THESE FEATS, IF YOU CAN...



ALWAYS BELIEVE IN YOUR SOUL

▲ IF YOU GET 200 mini medals, you'll pop a Silver Trophy *and* be able to buy yourself all the perks in the game. Double bonus!



IT'S A COUP!

■ UNLOCK ALL THE characters and then use their special abilities then boom, Bronze Trophy.

Beaten our trials? Let us know @PlayMag_UK!

"A PSEUDO-RPG SYSTEM IS TUCKED UNDER THE SKIN OF THE GAME"

morning cartoon that'll be the perfect palette cleanser in your collection alongside games like *Bloodborne*.

The franchise's extensive bestiary slowly makes its way into the game, but you'll be fighting a *lot* of colour-swaps and giant versions of things you've already killed. Make no mistake – this is a lengthy RPG wrapped up in a *Warriors* skin, and that's not bad... but gameplay of this sort doesn't lend itself to longevity. If you don't easily tire of comboing monsters to death, the way this game has implemented *Dragon Quest*'s crafting, mini medal system and questing into the formula artificially adds length to the whole thing. You can do extra tasks to earn buffs, gold and weapons, but that only means doing more of the same in the actual gameplay sections themselves.

If you're a *Dragon Quest* fan and want something tide you over until we get another localised game, you could do worse than this. The same could be said to *Dynasty Warriors* fans – this game makes *so* many improvements to the genre and reintroduces the fun back into it all, that we'd be hard pressed to recommend a better brawler on PS4 right now.

Dom Peppiatt

VERDICT

Riddled with shameless fan service, supported by actually decent production values. The biggest (read: best) change the *Warriors* formula has seen in years.



PlayMag_UK scored 8 for *Dragon Quest Heroes*

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

Lego Dimensions

If you build it, they will come



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Warner Bros.

DEVELOPER

TT Games

PRICE

£99.99

PLAYERS

1-2

INSTALL SIZE

5.4GB

AGE RATING

7+

TWITTER

@LEGODimensions

Trophies 39



ALSO ON PS3

ABOUT TEN MINUTES

into *Lego Dimensions*, a manual appears on-screen and you're instructed to stop playing and start building. It's unusual, even in a toy-powered videogame, to be told to put your controller down, but before you've even really begun *Dimensions'* franchise-spanning campaign, you're booted out to assemble the dozens of plastic pieces that make up the game's (undeniably sweet-looking) portal.

And it's great. It shouldn't come as a surprise that building *Lego* models is fun – the Danish have been pumping out colourful bricks since 1949, after all – but by combining its tried and tested model-building with the ever-popular TT Games videogame formula, *Dimensions* manages to give a new lease of life to both.

In fact, it's a bit baffling to think that *Lego Dimensions* is only arriving now, a year after Nintendo's amiibos launched, two years after the arrival of *Disney*

Infinity and a full four years after the first *Skylanders* game. Of all the brands tailor-made to take advantage of the toys-to-life craze that has dominated videogames, wallets and shelves over the past couple of years, *Lego* is the one synonymous with making iconic figurines. Still, though it's a little late on the scene, *Lego Dimensions* does its best to make up for lost time by using that time-honoured *Lego* videogame trick – packing in an absolutely absurd amount of content.

In terms of worlds, characters, quests and general variety, *Dimensions* is the biggest *Lego* title there's been. But this being an expansion-based game, that variety comes at a very literal (and often eye-wateringly steep) price. From the get-go, walls start springing up all over the place. Silver rubble can only be blown up by this character; ghost zones can only be navigated by this one; crawl spaces can only be accessed by another. All of these characters are readily accessible for prices ranging

from £15 to £30, but it grates to be reminded of precisely how much of the game you're missing out on right off the bat. This is of course an issue that every toys-to-life game has to contend with, but it feels particularly intrusive here.

That's not to say that the base *Dimensions* game (which will still set you back a cool £99.99) is lacking in content, however. You'll get everything you need to enjoy an exceptionally wacky *Lego* adventure included, and *Dimensions'* story is among the zaniest and most entertaining we've played. Hopping between worlds as Batman, Gandalf and *The Lego Movie's* Wyldstyle is fantastic fun, and references, in-jokes and just plain cool crossover moments come thick and fast.

Gameplay features the now-familiar *Lego* game combination of building puzzles, basic combat and floaty platforming, and while the physics are still as weightless and occasionally infuriating as ever, *Dimensions* is so relentless in its barrage of new

FOR FANS OF...



DISNEY INFINITY With the *Star Wars*-themed 3.0 version recently released, *Infinity* is now well established in the toys-to-life genre, and offers a pretty stellar cast of characters.



ΔΟΧ The crossover between worlds is cohesively done. *The Simpsons* and *Portal* sit happily side-by-side with *Doctor Who*.



“IN TERMS OF WORLDS, CHARACTERS AND VARIETY, DIMENSIONS IS THE BIGGEST LEGO TITLE THERE’S BEEN”

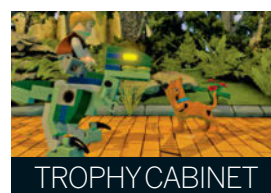


characters, locations and boss fights that it's difficult to dwell on these long-standing shortcomings for too long. Some portal-based elements help break things up as well, requiring you to move character models around to solve certain puzzles and take down specific enemies, but they're often more distracting and finicky than they are engaging.



Customisation options are as extensive as you'd expect – vehicles, characters and weapons are all upgradeable – and once you start investing in add-ons, you'll find plenty to do in the additional hub worlds that open up, whether that's exploring Springfield with Homer Simpson or tracking down an escaped Indominus

ΔΟΧ Boss fights offer some of the best mash-up moments. The Riddler riding a Balrog? Check.



TROPHYCABINET



FOREVER ALONE

You can use multiple characters to complete any level, you just have to use them one at a time.



SPEEDY THING GOES IN...

Make use of the pre-boss checkpoint on the Aperture stage to earn yourself an easy Silver.

Rex in *Jurassic World: Dimensions* additional packs are pricey, but they don't want for content.

And most importantly they give you an excuse to build figurines from *The Lord Of The Rings*, *Back To The Future*, *Portal* and *Ghostbusters*, to name but a few. The real joy in *Lego Dimensions* comes from assembling your characters and vehicles by hand and seeing them instantly come to life in the game. In that sense, it's pure wish fulfilment for anybody who loves pop culture and grew up playing with *Lego* – and that's pretty much all of us, right?

Ross Hamilton

VERDICT

Lego Dimensions is an excellent *Lego* crossover game, and it's a solid toys-to-life tie-in. The price is pretty steep, but *Dimensions* gives you plenty of reasons to invest.



PlayMag_UK scored 7 for *Lego Dimensions*

Follow our scores on [JUST A SCORE](#)

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 5

Play says shove it



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Activision

DEVELOPER

Robomodo

PRICE

£49.99

PLAYERS

1-20

AGE RATING

12+

TWITTER

@robomodo

Trophies 46



THERE'S A MODE in *THPS5*

where, in typical Simon Says fashion, you have to do the tricks that Tony calls out. Tony says kickflip, you kickflip. But if it comes up 'DO kickflip' (the 'DO' is in red, in case differentiating between two types of command proves too stressful), you don't, because TONY DIDN'T SAY. In our concocted back-story to this mode, we like to think that Tony is rocking back and forth in the corner of the skatepark after one concussion too many, randomly just babbling trick names to himself and the kids in the park have invented a game around this – perform the tricks the crazy old fool spews while ignoring similar cries from those trying to throw the 'player' off by doing their best impression of a 400-year-old skating legend. Tony's state in our version of events actually gels remarkably well with the quality of this game, too – a doddering, broken mess where once stood a truly original pillar of record-chasing excellence.

Easy as that mode may be in theory, it's also fundamentally broken. Stalls are incredibly hard to pull off consistently and since going against Tony's will slashes your multiplier, the game randomly deciding to make you grind instead of stall is an auto-fail on the harder versions – you'll reach the point where even seeing a lip trick come up on Tony's menu is cause to restart the challenge. And believe it or not, that's merely the tip of the shitberg when it comes to bugs, glitches and general problems with this squalid waste of a great IP. High-level play now relies enormously on luck, since it's not uncommon to see bails happen for literally no reason mid-string or for characters to fall through rails (or the world) during grinds. This is particularly noticeable in user-created parks – objects seldom snap together properly, adding a

horrible element of mystery as to when your combo might abruptly end. One moment, you're on course for breaking 20 million points but the next, you could be sliding down a ramp backwards, confused and demanding compensation for the millions of points you just lost to bad game design.

As if the fact that extended combos don't even work as well as they did on PS2 wasn't bad enough, adding in new mechanics that actively make the game worse takes the piss so much that we may never need to urinate

by reaching for the grind button a touch too early, while holding it down in anticipation of landing on a grindable edge now simply sends you hurtling back to earth. It's something that can be relearned, sure, but introducing a mechanic that shits on 15 years' worth of muscle memory is never going to sit well with fans. Special tricks, too, are worse than ever, activation after achieving full meter simply turning normal inputs into stunts until the bar runs dry. No quick flips or grabs for you during this time – everything you do will be 'sick' and

"IT'S NOT UNCOMMON TO SEE BAILS HAPPEN FOR LITERALLY NO REASON MID-COMBO"

again. The new slam move – activated by holding Triangle (yes, the grind button) in the air – is presumably intended to make landing on rails mid-jump easier by ignoring gravity, but it tends to have the opposite effect. Typical rail combos can now be lost

last 'a really long time,' making special tricks only really useful for abusing during the vert portion of a combo, perhaps with an extended special grind or stall as the meter runs out for maximum swag. Oh, and wave goodbye to transitions, too. Hit a manual or grind and



△× The creator of this user-made level clearly knows what's up...

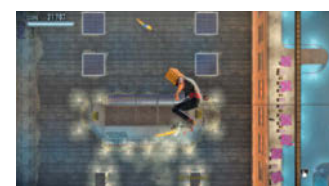


ΔΟΧ□ Disaster is pretty accurate. Thanks for that. Skating Luchador Security Guard!

Luke Albigés

While nailing a huge combo still feels incredible, the fact that the skill aspect of the game has been massacred by bugs, glitches and poor design makes this throwback difficult to recommend.

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**





Skylanders SuperChargers

Spyro with nitro



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Activision

DEVELOPER
Vicarious Visions

PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-2

INSTALL SIZE
16.7 GB

AGE RATING
7+

TWITTER
@SkylandersGame

Trophies 41



ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER *Skylanders* game and another new gameplay element designed to flog a raft of new toys to an eager young fan base.

You could easily be forgiven for writing off this year's vehicle-themed iteration of the toys-to-life franchise as a gimmicky cash-in, designed as it is to sap the wallets of parents everywhere with its roster of miniaturised boats, jets and cars. But to do so would be selling *Skylanders SuperChargers* short. Because whatever shortcomings it may have – the still-daunting price of entry chief among them – *SuperChargers'* new vehicular gameplay actually manages to reinvigorate what could have been a fairly mundane sequel.

What's immediately striking is just how much of the game is spent behind the wheel (or joystick, or whatever it is you use to steer a submarine). Nearly half of the sizeable adventure involves taking on vehicular challenges, whether

that's barrelling down obstacle-littered raceways, ramming enemies in some arena-based combat, or taking on specialised air and sea objectives – once you've purchased the requisite toys, naturally. There's still plenty of classic 3D platforming and combat to be found, but it's nice to see developer Vicarious Visions mix up the existing gameplay formula so extensively.

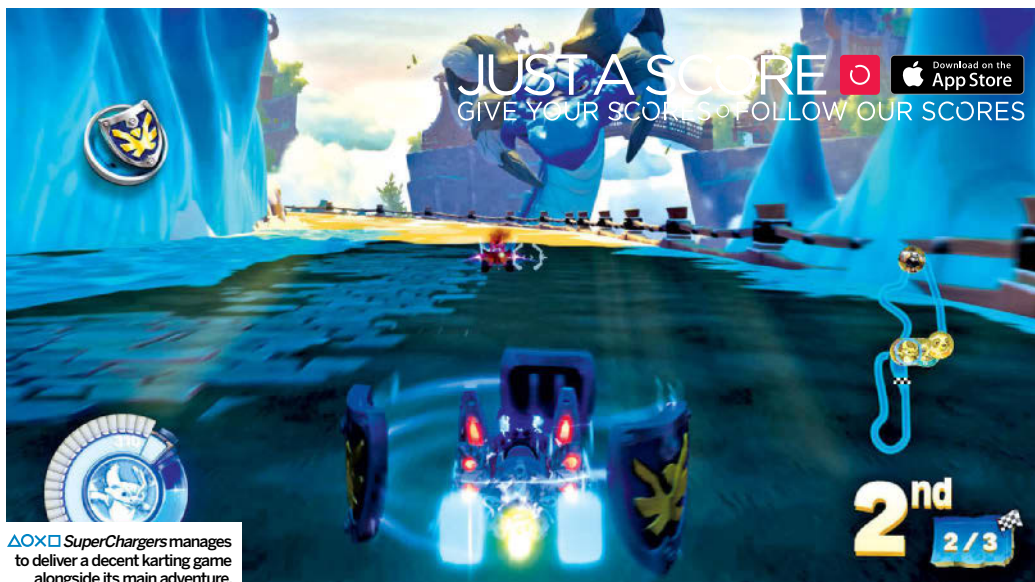
On-foot levels, meanwhile, remain as solid as ever, with stage design impressively varied throughout, though perhaps also a little conservative. Plenty of new mechanics are introduced – platform-obscuring cloud here, gravity-defying magnetism there – but each is self-contained and none of the levels branch out as extensively as you'd hope. On the one hand, things rarely get stale

“VEHICLES GET JUST AS MUCH ATTENTION AS THEIR SKYLANDER COUNTERPARTS”

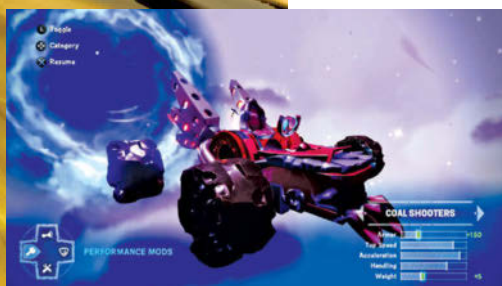
Vehicles get just as much attention as their Skylander counterparts too, both in their fully working and finely detailed models and their in-game equivalents. Each handles distinctly and has its own set of upgrades and modifications, allowing for a decent amount of customisation, and more to the point they all look *cool*, as well as having sweet names like Sky Slicer and Crypt Crusher.

before you're whisked back to Skylander Academy to embark on the next stage of the adventure, but on the other, it would be nice to see some of the more interesting quirks and features explored in a bit more depth.

Fortunately, there are an abundance of distractions to make up for the sometimes disappointingly short-lived excursions out into Skylands.



△OX□ SuperChargers manages to deliver a decent karting game alongside its main adventure.



Any vehicle-heavy game worth its salt is going to feature a race mode, but *SuperChargers*' sideline in kart racing is fully-featured and fun enough to be considered more than a mere mini-game. Responsive handling, varied power-ups and a healthy mix of courses make it an excellent addition, particularly in multiplayer – and all this for a mode that's supplementary to the core *Skylanders* experience.

Speaking of deceptively rewarding minigames, *Skystones* makes a welcome return too, and will no doubt prove an engrossing distraction for anyone with a predilection for collectable card games. It's not exactly *Hearthstone* (or the surprisingly excellent *Gwent* for that matter), but the revamped Overdrive version of the game is another example of an incidental element that has been given enough polish and attention to become a terrifically enjoyable game in its own right.

All of which does a good job of making up for some of *SuperChargers*' less than stellar presentational details – namely the repetitive animations and the frankly diabolical voice acting. If you thought you were above dropping £30 on a new character set then just wait until you've

heard the same attack sound bite every few seconds for a couple of hours. These are the times when it's apparent that *Skylanders* doesn't have the charm of a *Disney Infinity* or a *Lego Dimensions* to fall back on, and how many of the annoying aural and visual tics you'll be willing to put up with will likely come down to your age.

But these are minor gripes in the grand scheme of things, and they shouldn't dissuade anyone looking for an extensive, polished and most importantly *fun* action-platformer. It's impossible to ignore the price tag, but for anyone with an existing catalogue of *Skylanders*, or those looking to take the plunge on a toys-to-life franchise, *SuperChargers* is as well-rounded a package as you'll find anywhere.

Ross Hamilton

PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT

Skylanders' built-in card game gets a serious upgrade and is all the better for it



Card games are back in vogue, thanks largely to the phenomenal success of *Hearthstone*, and Vicarious Visions has been quick to put a *Skylanders* spin on the genre with *Skystones*. While the minigame made its debut in *Trap Team*, the *SuperChargers* version features more cards, bigger decks and special abilities, all of which combines to make for a simple (but quietly compelling) little time sink.

VERDICT

SuperChargers gambles by mixing up the *Skylanders* formula, but overall it pays off. Vehicles are a welcome addition to another solid (if prohibitively expensive) adventure.

PlayMag_UK scored 7 for Skylanders SuperChargers
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

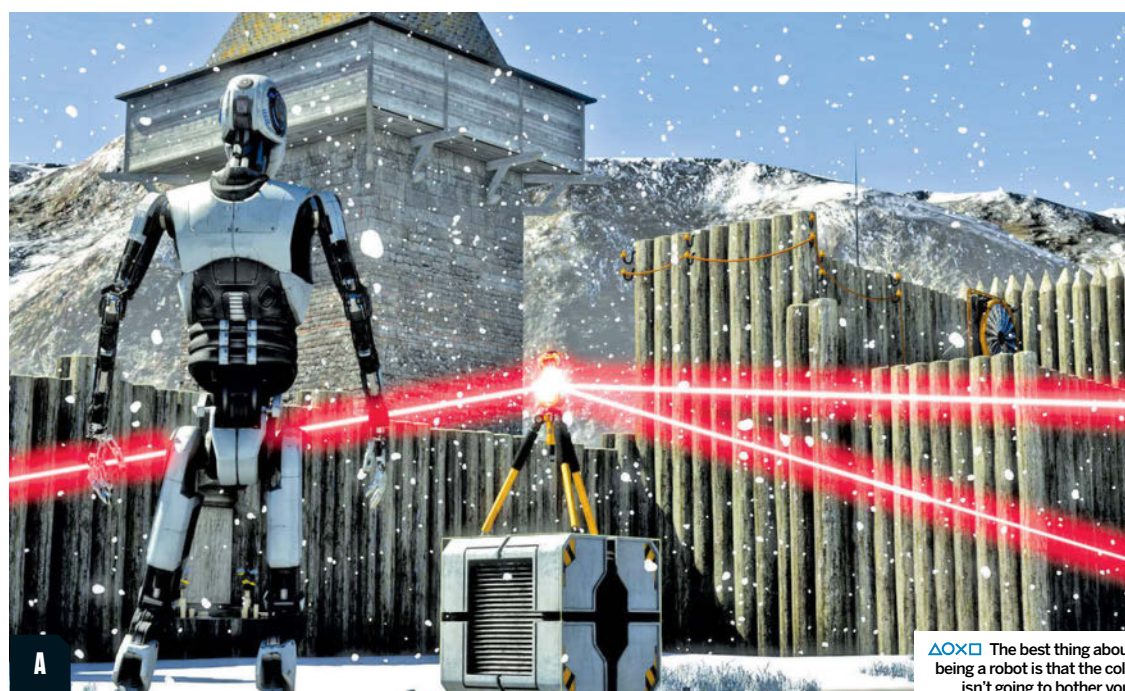
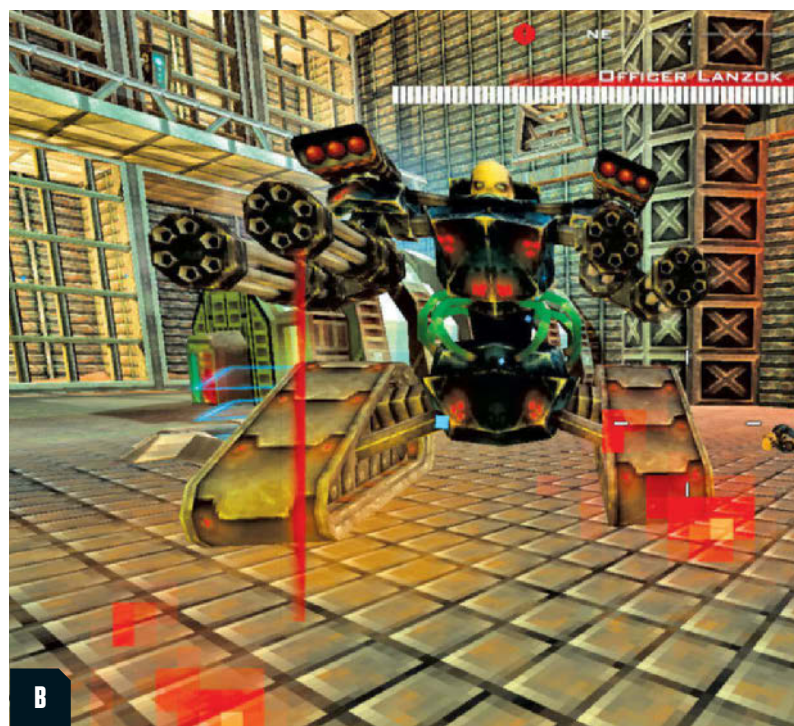
REVIEW ROUND-UP

THERE ARE SURELY few games on PS4 as smart as **THE TALOS PRINCIPLE [A]**. When we call it a smart game, we mean that in a number of different ways. For one, the game's puzzles are expertly designed – the rules simple and transparent enough to work with little explanation, but the construction of the puzzles themselves complex enough to challenge your grey matter. Solving those puzzles largely involves manipulating items like jammers that can unblock barriers and stop the functioning of other machinery, and refractors that you can use to activate light-powered switches. It's incredibly satisfying as a puzzle game, as well as being well structured and paced, always leaving you wanting to try one more puzzle. The game also shows its intelligence with its storytelling. You play as what appears to be an AI guided by a being that presents itself as a god. *The Talos Principle* does an excellent

job in fostering a sense of mystery about who that actually is, where you are, what you are and what you are working towards, gradually doling out snippets of information that give you clues to keep you intrigued about what is going on. Underpinning the whole thing are strong themes that encourage you to reflect on the experience and perhaps even the world at large. We're sure that a title that bills itself as a 'philosophical puzzle game' might sound a bit pretentious for

“THIS ISN'T THE DEFINITIVE VERSION OF MEAT BOY, DEFINITIVE OR NOT THOUGH, IT IS STILL ONE OF THE BEST PLATFORMERS ON PS4”

some, but you can bypass most of the additional story stuff if you'd rather just solve the puzzles. We'd recommend you don't, because it's of as high a standard as everything else in this excellent game.



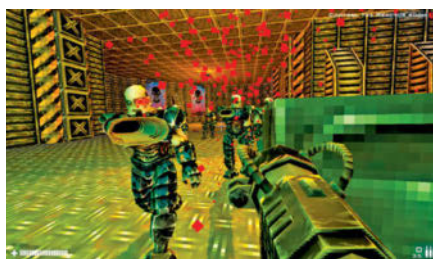
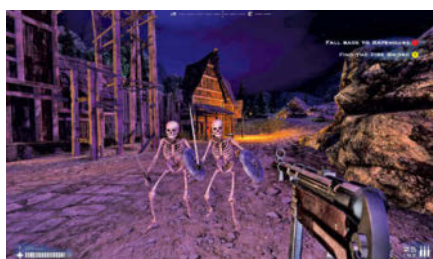
ΔOXO The best thing about being a robot is that the cold isn't going to bother you.

To call **BEDLAM [B]** a high concept game might make it sound like a philosophical experience in the vein of *The Talos Principle*, but in reality, it couldn't be more different. The game is a first-person shooter that's built around the idea of traveling through the history of the genre. That means you start off with blocky graphics and ostentatious enemies moulded on the likes of *Quake* and *Doom*, and will see the visuals gradually improve as you move through gaming history. The game doesn't take itself seriously at all, and that will come across very quickly courtesy of some genuinely funny dialogue (along with some dialogue that you can tell is meant to be funny, even if it misses the mark). A potential problem with the game is that you need to have been around long enough to have played the shooters that the game is referencing to get the most out of it. If it isn't immediately obvious to you early on, for example, that you have been dropped into what is clearly meant to be a multiplayer match of *Quake III Arena*, then you're going to be



missing out. The biggest problem with *Bedlam*, however, is that it just isn't a very good shooter. As much as we love the *idea* of what the game is doing, then, it becomes difficult to recommend by virtue of its execution.

We're spoilt for 'concept games' this issue, because we've got another one for you in the form of **LASERLIFE [C]**. The setup for the game is that a long-dead astronaut has come into contact with some kind of alien intelligence. You then reconstruct the astronaut's memories by playing through a rhythm-action game that requires you to guide two glowing lines using the controller's analog sticks and to synchronise with the beat using its triggers. As with *Bedlam*, we love the idea, but we're not entirely sold on the execution. There's a lack of finesse to the way the game handles and the new mechanics it gradually introduces to increase complexity as the game progresses don't really add anything to make the game feel fresh. Arguably the game's biggest problem, however, is that its soundtrack is weak, each song blending into an indistinct dirge of generic electronica. At its best moments, *Laserlife* does lull you into that trance-like state that rhythm-action games can pull you into when you lock yourself in to the beat of the drum and allow the



experience to wash over you, but those moments are all too fleeting.

We suspect that this is going to be far from a surprise to anyone who has already played **SUPER MEAT BOY [D]**, but guess what? It's still bloody brilliant on PS4. For those of you who don't know, *Super Meat Boy* is a deviously difficult platformer based on speed and execution. The game has a deserved reputation of earning its difficulty by virtue of the fact that it controls flawlessly, meaning that, as hard as it is, the tools are always in your hands to pull off the moves you need to. Mess up and you know it is your fault. Those tight controls dovetail with short levels and lightning quick restarts to make it an incredibly compulsive game that does everything possible to minimise the inevitable frustration that emerges



ΔOX□ Say what you want about *Laserlife*, you can't accuse it of lacking colour.



during harder levels. *Super Meat Boy* is a beautifully designed platformer that's exciting to play and satisfying when you get things right. We wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to anyone who hasn't played the game before. If you *are* a veteran, however, there is a caveat with the PS4 version: the game has a new soundtrack due to the studio being unable to obtain the rights to the original. The new soundtrack is okay, but for those who have the original ingrained in their heads, it's going to sound *wrong*. For that reason, there's a point to be made that this isn't the definitive version of *Meat Boy*. Definitive or not, though, it is still one of best platformers on PS4.

ΔOX□ Lava hurts; giant buzzsaws hurt; everything in *Meat Boy* hurts.





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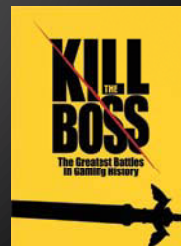
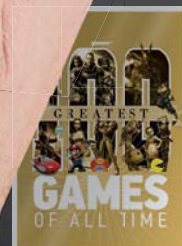
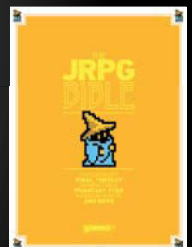
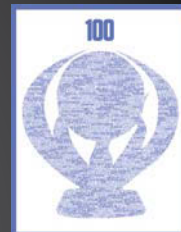
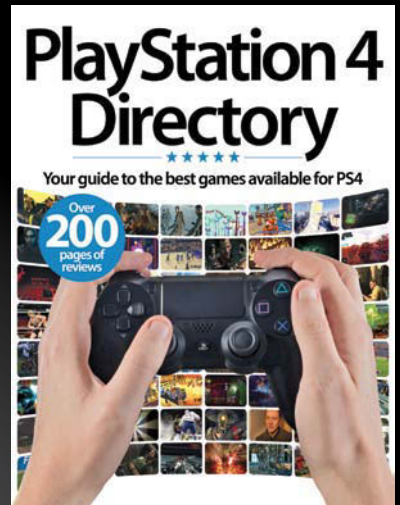
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Warning: Graphic Content

EDITOR'S
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The Making Of... CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT

Given that the PSone ushered in the 3D era for videogames, it's funny to think that one of the console's finest was a 2D throwback. Jon Denton examines the history of *Symphony Of The Night*, with a little help from Koji Igarashi himself



“SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT OFTEN FINDS ITSELF NEAR THE TOP OF ‘BEST GAMES OF ALL TIME’ LISTS, AND RIGHTLY SO”

These days, Konami is a bit of a mess. The once-proud videogame giant is but a mere shadow of its former self, with only the seminal *Pro Evolution Soccer* still in the development schedule alongside an army of insulting pachinko machines and free-to-play games for mobile devices.

Back in 1997, it was a very different story. On the back of a strong showing where Konami mixed its key franchises with licensed efforts like *Tiny Toon Adventures* (remember that? No?), the Japanese development house was about to take major steps into becoming perhaps the most potent force in third-party gaming. This is the very year *ISS Pro* was born, the year *Metal Gear Solid* was announced and demoed, and the year Konami perhaps perfected one of its most beloved franchises, *Castlevania*.

Symphony Of The Night often finds itself near the top of ‘Best Games Of All Time’ lists, and rightly so. Playing now reveals a 2D masterclass; a triumph of atmosphere and design, and a game so influential that its roots can be found in all manner of modern masterpieces. The phrase ‘Metroidvania’ is often used to describe a 2D game that involves exploration, with access to different areas withheld until your character finds new powers. Before *Symphony Of The Night*, though, this was simply known as a *Metroid* game.

We spoke to Koji Igarashi (aka IGA), assistant director on *SOTN* and former lord of all things *Castlevania* (now king of Kickstarter, given the response to his new project, *Bloodstained: Ritual Of The Night*), about how this classic came to be.



"Action games could be cleared in a short time, but I wished to create a game that could be enjoyed for a much longer period," he says, referring to the two-to-three hour romps that had defined console and arcade gaming since its inception. Few games in this genre had ever attempted to offer the kind of depth and scope of an RPG, certainly outside of Nintendo's meticulously crafted output.

Symphony Of The Night introduced a sprawling, open castle that the player could explore in any way they wished. Clever level design meant only a few critical paths were open at any point, but the way the environments wrapped round on themselves showed a commitment to creating something genuinely grandiose. The *Metroid* influence was clear, but IGA had not forgotten the series roots. While the ambition was grander, this was still very much *Castlevania*.

However, those games had a reputation. Like Capcom's *Ghouls 'N Ghosts*, *Castlevania* was not for the feint of heart. Action games still had their roots in the arcades, and horrendous difficulty was just the norm. We can barely remember finishing any games as children of the Eighties; instead, just reaching the third or fourth level felt like an achievement. While the original *Castlevania* is quite

a short game if played in one sitting, its extreme difficulty meant it could theoretically be played for months... or more likely, given up on in favour of something a little more palatable.

"I wanted to change the impression that *Castlevania* was this difficult-to-access action game," IGA explains. There was a cultural shift in how games were perceived and how they were played, ushered in by the 32-bit era. Previously, outside of traditional PC gaming, if a player wanted to be able to save their progress, they'd either need the developer to have included an expensive battery in the game cartridge, or the game would spit out a password for your progress, which you'd laboriously enter when you next stuck it on.

With the advent of PlayStation came the innovation of the Memory Card, a paltry 1MB piece of plastic that enabled you to save your game, and even take that game save to another person's house. It meant games could be more ambitious, to encourage you to play for longer, comfortable in the knowledge that they weren't going to kick you back to the start as soon as you turned your console off. Vicious difficulty was replaced by maturing game mechanics, and there are few finer examples than *Symphony Of The Night*.

BLUFFER'S GUIDE

Everything you need to know in five facts



1 *SOTN* is actually the first game in the series to feature exploratory level design.



2 And with the game's release, the horrible phrase 'Metroidvania' was born.



3 You play as Alucard, and can find new weapons and abilities as you progress.



4 The game featured RPG elements, making it a deeper experience than its predecessors.



5 Originally, *SOTN* was meant for the ill-fated Mega-CD add-on for the Mega Drive.



FURTHER READING



OLDER – CASTLEVANIA

The original game is a straightforward affair, but still a tight, technical slice of classic 2D action. You can bash through it fairly quickly if you're feeling historical.



NEWER – DARK SOULS

It's astonishing how much *SOTN* has influenced *Dark Souls*. The sprawling layout of the levels is one thing, but there are enemy types you'll recognise in both games.



STANDOUT MOMENT



RETURN OF THE DRAC

The game's final battle is its most memorable. In a game littered with technically demanding boss fights, it shouldn't come as a surprise that the final battle is probably the best. Dracula assumes a gruesome form and pushes the PSone's sprite-juggling capabilities in the process. Like every fight in the game, the secret is in memorising attack patterns and capitalising on openings, but here you should have enough power to do serious damage. There are numerous secrets and tricks you need to activate in order to get the game's best ending, but on a first playthrough, just *reaching* Drac is a feat unto itself.

Despite seeming like a throwback – a 16-bit-looking game on a 32-bit console – *Symphony Of The Night* was far more progressive than many people at the time gave it credit for. Its adoption of RPG elements feels natural today, when almost every game allows you to level up, manipulate a skill tree or muck about with your equipment. But here, it was revolutionary.

"When we decided to adopt RPG elements, we agreed that users should receive something good when beating enemies. So I thought of adding Experience Points to the game," IGA tells us. "I thought that even the users who were not good at playing this type of action game would be able to clear *Symphony Of The Night* if I adopted this particular system."

While there's no doubt that mechanically *SOTN* is a simpler game than its brutal forebearers, it's still one tricky customer. From Software games aside, we have been babied these past fifteen years by games that are only too happy for us to succeed.

Symphony Of The Night's combat isn't hugely sophisticated – its all about spatial awareness and timing – but it will punish you if you're sloppy, and send you all the way back to the main menu.

Thankfully, the occasional bout of pad-chucking frustration is offset by an audiovisual treatment that's truly ageless. Pixel art of this quality never really looks old – the animation on silver-haired vampire hunter Alucard is world class, and the sumptuous art from Ayami Kojima is now legendary. No matter how you play it, *Symphony Of The Night* is still a very handsome game.

Even better, though, is the music. An ingenious score blends heavy metal, gothic organ music, experimental jazz and classic chiptune to create a soaring musical treat. So good, in fact, that you could be forgiven for thinking the whole game was constructed around it. IGA is quick to quash that rumour, though. "The music direction has never led the creation of the game," he states. "I have always asked Michiru [Yamane] to compose



CROSS TO BEAR

Symphony Of The Night is available on the Classics range on the PlayStation store, for both Vita and PS3, but be wary if you do download it on PS3. While it looks the part, there is a small but noticeable input delay which makes an already difficult game downright infuriating at times. It spoils the flow and fluidity that is crucial to the experience. If you want to experience the game in all its glory and don't own the PSone original, your best bet is the rather excellent *Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles* on PSP and Vita.

music in accordance with the actual game and never the other way around. She always co-ordinated with the development team and composed music from the image of the stages." When asked which tune was his favourite, IGA playfully admits that he's slightly biased: "My favourite is *Castle Dracula* which starts to play when Alucard enters the castle for the very first time. I was

pixels, his flowing hair, sumptuous animation and constant shimmering shadow are instantly appealing.

IGA explains the thought process behind bringing Alucard to the forefront, eschewing the Belmonts who had been *Castlevania* mainstays up until then.

"I decided to choose a character that had a special link to the previous *Castlevania*

"I DECIDED TO CHOOSE A CHARACTER THAT HAD A LINK TO THE PREVIOUS TITLES, ALUCARD WAS JUST A REALLY COOL HERO"

impressed with the way the music starts to play once Alucard enters the dark castle, and then suddenly the castle gets bright and zombies start to appear. It might be because that particular part of the game was programmed by myself."

It helps, of course, that Alucard is one of the coolest characters you'll come across anywhere. Even though he's just a stack of

titles, Alucard was just a really cool hero, and that is why I think *Symphony Of The Night* has been received so favourably by the fans. The world of the vampire that I have in my mind is beautiful and fleeting with blood and darkness. The series had a visual image featuring hostility, but I tried to change the image since the game concept itself was going to change."

It's always fascinating to hear about the conceptual process behind a game's development, about the small details that go on to flesh out these complex patterns of code. *Symphony Of The Night* may not be quite as smooth an experience as it was 18 years ago – the first time you're booted all the way back to the beginning of the game because you missed the save point is enough to have you tearing your own flowing grey locks out – but there's such craft here, such a progressive sense of design and genuine authorship. At a glance it may look like any retro game, but it only takes a few minutes to see what has been achieved here and how it has gone on to influence gaming since.

IGA is a little coy when it comes to talking about this game as one of the all time greats. "I am really proud that it has been evaluated as such," he says. "I cannot say it was the best since I think I need to always make every endeavour to create better games for everyone to enjoy."

Will *Bloodstained* be that game? If anyone can recreate the magic of *Symphony Of The Night*, then it's the man they call IGA...

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INTERVIEW

THE BAND IS BACK TOGETHER

We speak to Jamie Jackson, creative director and studio head at Guitar Hero Live developer Freestyle Games, about bringing the series back with a new model

Development Gameplay

Can you tell us about the concept behind Guitar Hero TV?

We wanted to build a platform that was about content delivery – we thought, when we came up with [*GH Live*], ‘How can we deliver stuff to our players without doing another box, without making another disc?’ From a design perspective, that’s where it began. That led to the creation of GHTV, this platform of music and content that we can add to without ever affecting *you*, the player. You never have to download stuff, you can stream it all. Then we thought what can we build into that as a *game*? So we’re putting more modes into GHTV itself later on, too, adding even more depth, especially for competitive players.

We wanted it to be a really competitive environment online, but not to kick people in the teeth if they aren’t very good. The fact you’re always playing against people gives the game a nice human, competitive element. The thing with

DJ Hero was that you had to unlock certain sets – but we always felt that... well, people have such a diverse taste in music: if you’re making a heavy metal fan play through a soft rock set to get to what they want to play, they get really frustrated by it. They just get to what they want to get to. Not [locking] anything away was driven by that idea. If you want, you can just jump straight in and play what you want. If you’re a casual player, you can pay money if you don’t want to have the progression to do what you want to do online.

Is post-launch revenue necessary to a developer nowadays?

I’ve been making games for 16 years – I started out when online didn’t exist, and everything changes as you go on. So as a developer – especially as a console developer – you have to think about *everything* you can do to provide a longer tail to your game. I think gamers expect more nowadays: every big game out there has

additional content, and people expect that. We wanted to do that, and GHTV means we don’t have to build a disc to deliver it. I think it’s 80-90 per cent connected consoles nowadays, versus less than 40 per cent last generation.

Were season passes ever a likelihood for *Guitar Hero: Live*?

When you go through a design process, you take everything in from the world around you and consider it as an option. Whilst we didn’t necessarily go down the Season Pass route, we *did* think about the various types of *Guitar Hero* player – those that will play the song on the hardest difficulty and are only concerned with beating the crap out of everybody, and the casual route that just want to get a bunch of mates in and play for a night. That group inspired the 24-hour pass – you can play as much as you want, anywhere in the game, with no caps. That fulfills that need for that group of people.

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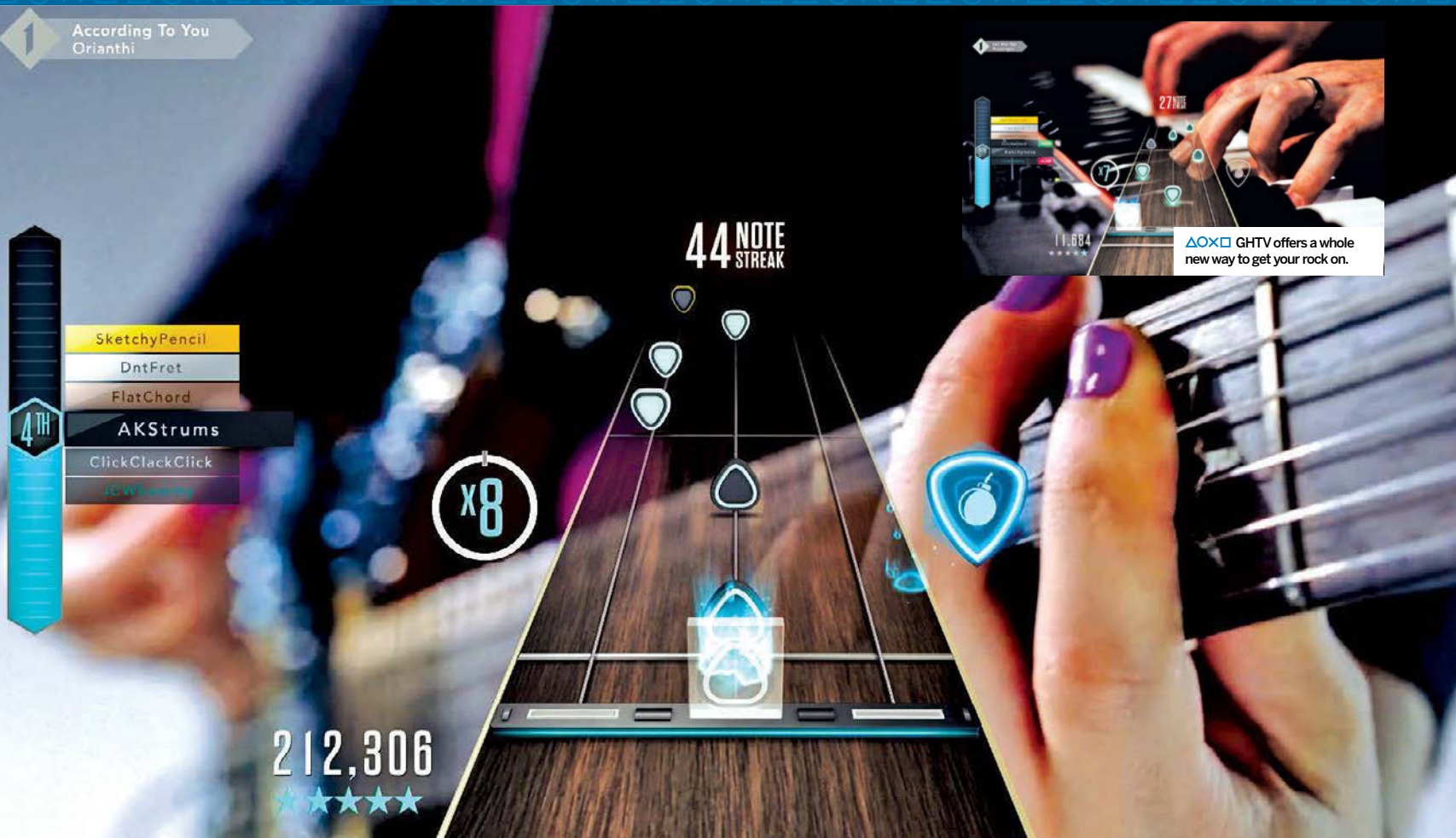
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According To You
Orianthi



You are tailoring your transactions specifically for your core audience then?

When you make games, you carry out a consumer study – that sounds so dull, but what that means is you look at who's going to buy your game: will it be predominately male, will it be predominately female, what's your age range and so on... I won't go into details (I'm sure you can imagine what *Call Of Duty's* and *Destiny's*

are like...) but they're interesting. Ours showed that our audience ranges from nine-year-olds to 50-year-olds, split between male and female. It's just one of those games. We made a decision early on – we couldn't just focus on one specific group: 'accessible' became one of our key words and thinking about that helped us make the most of our decision when we were building it.

We have been given the keys to an incredibly loved brand, and we changed quite a lot. I was nervous, personally, and the studio was tired and nervous too. I stayed away from message boards and everything... but the response from people was good, well it was from people that played it. I don't mind telling, you, though, I was

shitting myself. Guitar Hero TV, for us, needed to be about communicating with our fans. We can really see what people are liking through that. If there's a track that basically no-one is playing, then we don't put any more of that kind of track in there. But if there's one track or a band that everyone's loving, then we can get that song or

"I WAS NERVOUS, PERSONALLY, AND THE STUDIO WAS NERVOUS TOO. I STAYED AWAY FROM MESSAGE BOARDS"

band in there quickly. The results of how Guitar Hero TV works shows us what people *really* want – a group of people on social media might say something but when you've got [the telemetry] there saying something else, then you know how to specifically cater for your audience.

EXTENDED PLAY

BORDERLANDS

When it comes to games that can deliver hours of fun through the campaign and that give you loads of extra ways to play, you can't do much better than *Borderlands*...



TALES FROM THE BORDERLANDS

■ **FOR FANS OF** *Borderlands*, Telltale's episodic series *Tales From The Borderlands* is an excellent way of experiencing that universe in a completely different way. It may move *Borderlands* into the Telltale template of timed choices and branching narratives, but it retains the art style, tone and humour of *Borderlands*. In that sense, it still feels

very '*Borderlands*', even if it is completely different from a gameplay perspective. The game's dual protagonists and some of its key characters are completely new to the series, but there are also a few returning characters from the mainline series who make an appearance to keep the *Borderlands* devotees among you happy.



THE PRE-SEQUEL

■ **BORDERLANDS: THE PRE-SEQUEL** is a game that went under the radar a little bit – probably because it wasn't developed by Gearbox and it originally came out for the PS3 after the PS4 hit stores. For that reason, there are a lot of people who might have given this one a miss. We're not about to claim that it is the best *Borderlands* game, because it's not. It does, however, offer more of the *Borderlands* formula, this time with low-gravity areas and tons of new guns. If what you want is more *Borderlands*, then you can't go wrong with it.



DLC

■ **WHEN IT COMES** to things that have a bad reputation in videogames, DLC has to be near the top of that list. You can understand why: it's often lazily shovelled out as a cash-in, or even represents content held back from the main game so it can be sold on for extra later. *Borderlands*, on the other hand, has a great reputation for the quality of its DLC, meaning that it's one of the few series where it's worth thinking about extending your experience

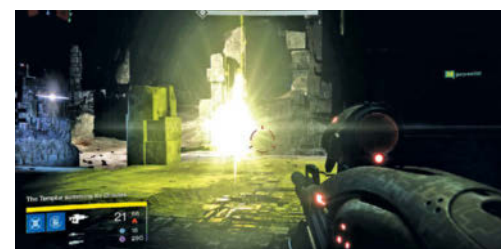
by jumping into those downloadable extras. In terms of story DLC, highlights include *The Secret Army Of General Knoxx* and *Claptrap's New Robot Revolution* from the first *Borderlands* and *Tiny Tina's Assault On Dragon Keep* from *Borderlands 2*. There's also the addition of new characters like Krieg – added in the *Psycho Pack* for *Borderlands 2* – which give you brand new abilities to play with and, by extension, new ways to play the game.



THE HANDSOME COLLECTION

■ **IT'S A PITY** that the PS4's *Borderlands: The Handsome Collection* doesn't include the original *Borderlands*, but it's still a great way to experiencing *Borderlands 2* and *Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel* on the current

generation. If you had either of the games on PS3, it's cool that you can transfer your PS3 saves onto PS4 too. With all the games' DLC included as well, *The Handsome Collection* represents damn good value for money.



DESTINY

■ **IF YOU LIKE** what *Borderlands* offers, we would suggest that *Destiny* is another game for you. First of all, there's the fact that the game supports online co-op multiplayer, allowing you to play it with friends. Then there is the fact that you can choose different classes which have a big impact on how you play the game. Lastly, but most importantly, *Destiny* is entirely based around playing for random loot drops in the hope of getting better guns and equipment to improve your character. Sounds a bit grindy, sure, but if you like *Borderlands*, you can't pretend you don't love a bit of grinding.

HOW TO...

MASTER METAL GEAR ONLINE

Are you getting owned in MGO? We've got some tips to help you own the battlefield for your team

■ **METAL GEAR ONLINE** isn't your typical online shooter, though many people are playing it as if it is in the early going. Let us be your Campbell and guide you on an alternative (correct) path...

GATHER INTEL

■ **IF YOU CAN** spot enemies before they spot you, you're at a major advantage in *MGO*. For that reason, it's worth getting yourself to a good vantage point, whipping your binoculars out, and seeing if you can spot a few enemies. E. Locaters are another useful tool that might be worth adding to your loadout – throw them out like grenades and they will reveal any enemies in that vicinity. Most importantly, though, share your intel. Saluting your allies by pressing R3 means enemies they spot will appear for you too.

GO NON-LETHAL

■ **KILLING YOUR FOES** isn't always the best solution in *MGO*. In Bounty Hunter, when you are faced with an enemy that's taken out a few members of your team, the temptation is to shoot them back. If you can sneak up on them and Fulton them, though, the tickets they've taken will be added to your team's total, which is much more beneficial. This is why you shouldn't always sprint about firing off shots. Move slowly and cautiously where possible to avoid appearing on the opponents' map and you should find more opportunities to Fulton will appear.



TRAVEL LIGHT

■ **IT'S IMPORTANT TO** pay attention to your loadout and think about what is actually useful to you. Everything in your inventory adds to your characters weight and the more they are carrying, the slower they will move. That means that if you've got things in your loadout that

you're not really using, you may as well take them out to lighten the load. Also, make sure that you equip the perks that suit your own play style – sniper perks if you enjoy looking at the battlefield down the barrel of a rifle or stealth perks if you're more of an infiltrator, for example.

WATCH YOUR BACK

■ **IF YOU'VE NOT** given it a shot yet, it might be worth trying out the shield, which can have a variety of different uses. For one, carrying it around on your back is handy when it comes to the problem of getting shot in the back. If you like using Walker Gears, it can be incredibly useful – with the armour provided by the Walker Gear at your front and the shield on your back, you become something of an unstoppable tank.



SHARING



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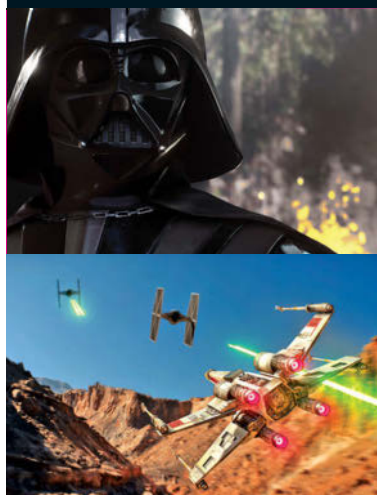
WE GO IN-DEPTH to analyse *Syndicate's* gameplay and ask whether the game will save the series.

FIFA VS PES



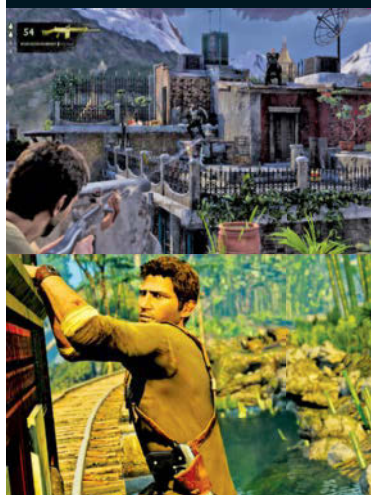
ONE PES ADVOCATE and one FIFA fan thrash out the most important question of all time.

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT



REPORTING BACK ON the beta from the front lines.

THE NATHAN DRAKE COLLECTION



IS THIS HD remaster really worth your time and money?

WWE 2K16



OUR VERDICT ON the latest attempt to capture the magic of the squared circle.



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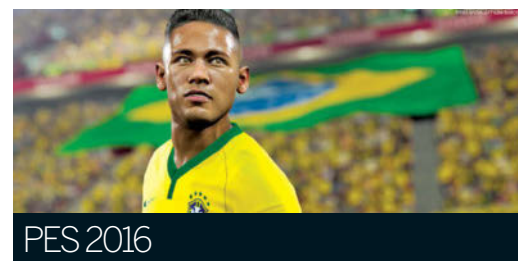
Keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter channels for information on our Twitch tournaments, where you can play videogames with us for the world to watch!

The game changes each time, and the best players will win prizes – free games, or just some of the other tat that we found around our office. Come and join in the fun next time and maybe you could win something neat.



FALLOUT 4

Join us on our journey out of the vault and into the brutal wastelands of *Fallout 4*. Who knows what we might find!



PES 2016

COME AND WITNESS our footballing skills. Or us spending half an hour in advanced search looking for the next big thing in Master League...

DESTINY: THE TAKEN KING

GET MORE EXOTICS

With Exotic Quests, there's no need to direct all your prayers to RNGesus in Destiny. That said, some can be tricky to unravel, so we're here to help...



SLEEPER SIMULANT HEAVY FUSION RIFLE

■ **THE QUEST TO** own this Exotic is available to everyone. But, your opportunity to claim it may prove elusive since its events are not always accessible. To be eligible, you'll first need to hand in four DVALIN Fusion Rifle Relics to Banshee-44 – these are fairly common drops from enemies. When the Quest is in rotation, a Level 41 mission called 'The First Firewall' shows up on Earth. Its boss drops the Curious Transceiver, inspect it and input the following codes (0=top, 1=bottom):

0-1-0-0-1-1-1-0-1
0-1-0-0-1-1-0-0
0-1-1-1-0-1-1-1-0-0
0-1-0-1-0-1-0-0

The next mission, Shadow Call, takes you back to Devil's Spire. Defeat this inside of four minutes to claim the IKELOS Fusion Core. This needs repairing using five components, the first of which is from dismantling a Legendary or Exotic heavy weapon. The rest are retrieved from The Archive Mission on Venus, and defending Warsats in public events on the Moon, Mars and Cosmodrome.

JADE RABBIT SCOUT RIFLE



■ **IT IS THE** exclusive RNG drop to die for. Jade Rabbit looks sweet, but its main attraction is the rare Fate Of All Fools perk that sees chained body shots enhance damage on the next precision shot.

ZHALO SUPERCELL AUTO RIFLE



■ **SO FAR, THIS** RNG drop is the only known elemental Primary weapon in *The Taken King*. The Zhalo Supercell perk chains lightning across tightly-packed enemies and reloads on multi-kills.



BOOLEAN GEMINI SCOUT RIFLE

■ **THIS EXOTIC SCOUT** can be equipped at Level 30, making it very handy to level up an alt Guardian. After beating Oryx in the story mission Regicide, the first step toward earning Gemini is undertaking The Taken War: Petra Quest, which requires hunting down Taken Champions across the Solar System.

After completing the Taken War: Petra, Variks requires that you track down the Wolves of Mars: Fallen pirates in stages titled Thin The Pack; Hunt the Archon Priest by patrolling the Rubicon Wastes; complete the mission A New Den in the Iron Line; defeat a Fallen Walker in the mission Knock Knock, and finally a boss battle against Orbiks Prime in the mission called Prime's Path.

Petra then assigns you to the Dreadnaught with orders to kill 50 enemies in Hull Breach, Mausoleum and Hall Of Souls. Then, engage in Court Of Oryx Tier 1 battles. Do this until receiving the Tech Witch's Brooch.

This ought to be enough to claim the Boolean Gemini from Petra as a gift, although your Queen's Wrath faction rank must be three or above. Catch up by completing Queen's Bounties or running through the *HOW* story missions.

NO TIME TO EXPLAIN PULSE RIFLE



■ **SINCE NOBODY HAS** reported owning this Stranger's Rifle (pictured) clone, obtaining it is a mystery. There is a theory that the FWC is the key, and the FWC link has been legitimised by a secret quest.

TLALOC SCOUT RIFLE (Warlock Only)



■ **WE LOVE THE** Overflow perk on this, which grants better handling and stability when your Super is charged. Warlocks can grab this by reaching the Gunsmith Quest that becomes available at Rank 3.



EXOTIC SWORDS

RAZE-LIGHTER (SOLAR), **Dark-Drinker (Void)** and **Bolt Caster (Arc)** are unique Exotic Swords earned from a series of challenging steps. The Quest 'A Broken Will' opens after the Dread Patrol post-story mission is completed for Cayde-6, basically making the Dreadnaught available for patrol. From here you collect 25 Hadium Flakes from chests, returning them in bulk to Shaxx. He offers you Sol Edge, Void Edge or Arc Edge in return. After Infusing this sword to Light 280 or above, Shaxx launches a Quest called 'A Sword Reforged' during which you must kill 50 Majors and 25 players in the Crucible, find and Kill Echtar the Sword of Oryx on the Dreadnaught, collect ten sword-specific Materials, perform a ton of elemental Ability kills relevant to your chosen sword, and finally complete the Sunless Cell Strike by killing both your element-specific Warden and the boss within a 30-second window. Good luck.



TOUCH OF MALICE SCOUT RIFLE

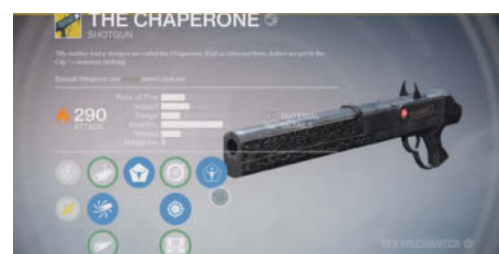
■ **THIS MOST OUTLANDISH** of Exotics is your reward for conquering the King's Fall Raid and scouring the Dreadnaught for 45 Calcified Fragments. It melts the Taken King when you return to confront him the Rifle in hand. The Touch Of Malice perk regenerates the final round in the clip with bonus damage, though it'll deplete health with each shot. Touch Of Mercy counter-balances this, regenerating health after three rapid kills.

Eris Morn commissions every related Quest, starting with Shattered Past to launch your Shattered Fragment search. Along the way you'll complete Hunger Pangs (comprising two special missions in search of Taken targets), then revisit the Raid in Road To King's Fall to slay the Warpriest, Deathsinger Ir Anûk, and Oryx once more. You'll ultimately need 50 Hadium Flakes, 50 Weapon Parts and 25 Wormspore to claim the Exotic from an almost cheery Eris.



BLACK SPINDLE SNIPER RIFLE

■ **HIGH LIGHT LEVELS** across your fireteam are an enormous help in pursuit of the coveted Black Spindle, the sniper rifle that's almost as notorious as Gjallarhorn. Black Spindle is only available when the Daily Heroic Story mission Lost To Light appears on the Director, so keep an eye out for it. Assemble your best Fireteam and launch Lost To Light. Complete the mission as normal until the point where the Ogre is Taken and the shard is collected for Eris. From here, quickly run to the doors that require one and then two relics to unlock. Ignore the final door that requires three relics because you are now looking for the door leading to the Dusk Warren, familiar from The Shadow Thief Strike encounter featuring Taniks. You have ten minutes from the ascending the elevator to clear each successive room of enemies, culminating in a Taken-cluttered arena defending Driviks, The Chosen. All enemies must be slain before the timer runs out. Take out the Blights FAST.



THE CHAPERONE SHOTGUN

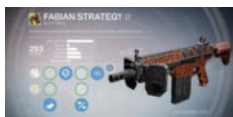
■ **AMANDA HOLLIDAY OFFERS** her Jolly Holliday Quest sometime after reaching Level 40, but only if your Guardian is Rank 3 or above in the Crucible. Exotic hand cannon The Last Word is needed for the first step: get kills in the Crucible with TLW equipped. While it's better to get the kills with TLW, you can also use the rest of your loadout to reach the 100 per cent completion checkpoint, including Heavy and Special weapons, grenades and supers. Just keep TLW in your Primary slot. After this, Amanda asks for a generous donation of 15,000 Glimmer via Rahool the asshool. Next, a slightly easier kill-'em-all step is launched, requiring shotgun takedowns across PvE and PvP. It's faster and more fun in Crucible, but you may prefer killing Level 40 Enemy Majors in Heroic Strikes and Story missions. Finally, 'simply' get the kills against Valus Mau'ual and Valus Tlu'urn using your shotgun in a unique version of the Shield Brothers Strike.

THE FIRST CURSE HAND CANNON



■ **THIS QUEST TELLS** 'The Story Of The Last Word' and only unlocks after reaching Rank 5 with the Gunsmith. It eventually requires a precision kill spree in the Crucible, so good luck with that.

FABIAN STRATEGY AUTO RIFLE (Titan Only)



■ **LIKE TLALOC**, this Exotic is acquired upon reaching Rank 3 with the Gunsmith. It's offered after completing the quest, and has a perk that increases handling, stability and ROF when enemies are close.

HEREAFTER SNIPER RIFLE



■ **HEREAFTER REPLACES** the Icebreaker for coolest sound effect of a Sniper Rifle, if not any Exotic. Sadly, it is an RNG drop, but it seems that it's fairly common drop from our experience.

ACE OF SPADES HAND CANNON (Hunter Only)



■ **A COOL PRIMARY** created for Hunters is available from the Gunsmith via the Back In The Saddle Quest. It has a new perk called Maverick that replenishes ammo from your reserves on precision kills.

TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE



BROKEN AGE

PLATFORM: PS4/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5

TROPHIES: 45 🏆 1 🏆 2 🏆 16 🏆 26

■ **YOU'RE GOING TO** want to go and look up what the 25 missable Trophies in this game are – the game has eight save slots so it's best to use them as checkpoints before each puzzle. You can use a 'spoon' item when playing as Shay, too – use it on *everything*: there are Trophies on offer for interactions in the world, and there's a bonus one up for grabs if you let the spoon keep talking when you meet it. Once you get an item called 'Grabbin' Gary', you'll want to use that on everything, too – pick it up in the quest line that your mum gives you in the early game. Using both the spoon and Gary on *everything* means you'll have to investigate the nuances of the world, collecting rewards as you go, and also works towards the two longest Trophies.



SUPER MEAT BOY

PLATFORM: PS4/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 6/5

TROPHIES: 24 🏆 1 🏆 7 🏆 10 🏆 6

■ **WHERE DO YOU** even begin? You're lucky the Vita has the best D-pad in this console generation because you're going to really put that sucker through its paces. The PSN version of *Super Meat Boy* eschews the XBLA Achievement list in favour of the Steam list, which is sadistic. If you're going for speed-runs, focus on finding 50 bandages and unlocking Naija – glitching through one-block walls is a god-send. En route, you'll get Trophies for 11 of the 16 characters. Then, you're best off focusing on the '...without dying' Trophies. There's no cheat to this – you'll have to rely on skill. Here's one little trick, though: you can try the level again from the menu if you're *about* to die and it won't break your streak.

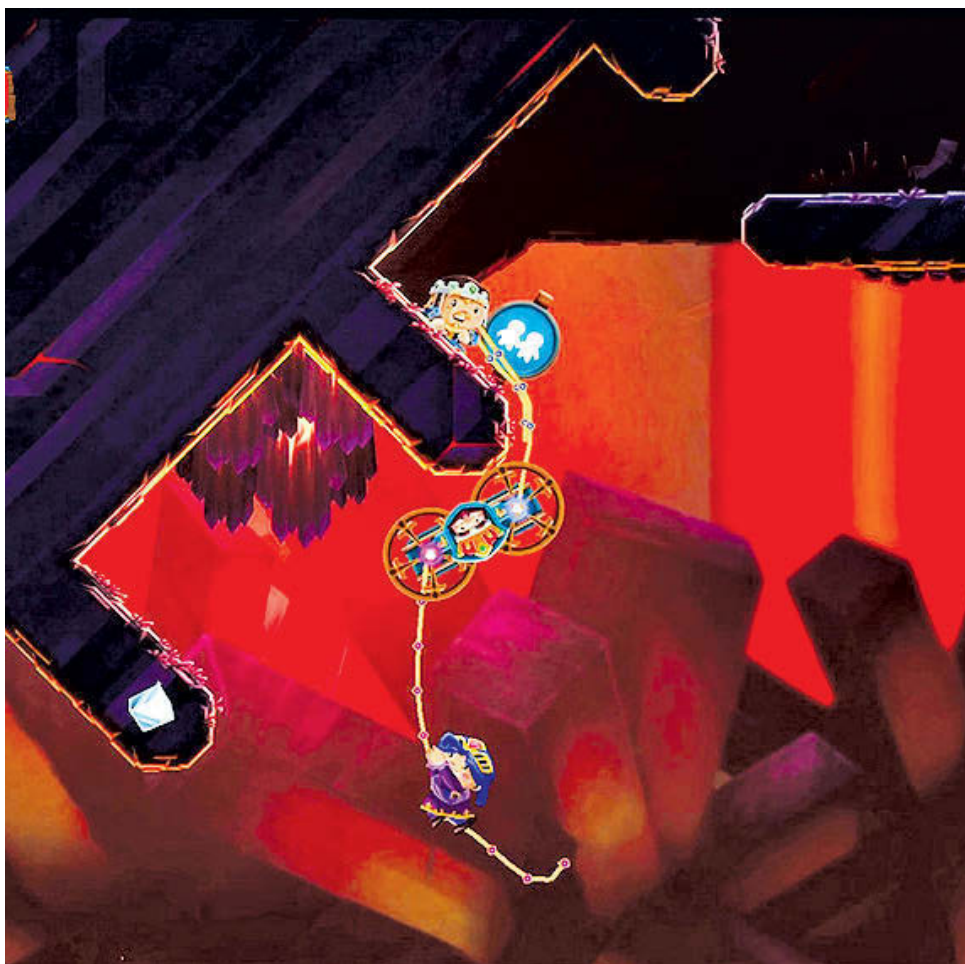
UNMECHANICAL EXTENDED

PLATFORM: PS4/PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5

TROPHIES: 17 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 4 🏆 13

■ **WANT SOME EASY** low-level Trophies? Set aside an hour or two and you get grab everything *Unmechanical Extended* has to offer... unfortunately, it's not the most fun game in the world. To be honest, though, the puzzles are simple enough that you don't need to apply too much mental effort, meaning that those two hours or so are going to be relatively stress-free. There are two endings in *Unmechanical Extended* – with a Trophy for each – but you can simply reload your save game once you've finished the game and choose the alternate ending from the same screen. Then, you'll want to finish off the five bonus levels that form the 'Extended' part of the game's title, and then do the same with again with both endings. There are missables in this game, so if you don't have everything at this point, just fly on back through the whole game and get what you need – like we said, it's an easy one and it won't take you too long.





CHARIOT

PLATFORM: PS4/PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5
TROPHIES: 37 🏆 1 🏆 3 🏆 19 🏆 14

■ **THERE'S A GOLDEN** rule for Trophy hunters in *Chariot* – if the map says go one way, then make damn sure that you go the other way. Reveal *everything* on your first playthrough, and make sure to collect any skulls or blueprints that reveal themselves en route – there are three skulls per map, if that helps. Once you hit Level 5-4, you

“IF THE MAP SAYS GO ONE WAY, THEN MAKE DAMN SURE THAT YOU GO THE OTHER WAY”

should be able to go back through the whole game and pick up anything you missed (thanks to the Metroidvania-esque layout). Complete Level 5-5 – which we recommend in you tackle in co-op mode – then start mopping up the speed-run Trophies. If you're playing cooperatively, then you'll net a couple of extra Trophies en route to the end, but if you're not, just power up another DualShock and you'll get them with minimal effort.

KUNG FU RABBIT

PLATFORM: PS3/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5
TROPHIES: 17 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 2 🏆 15

■ **SO YOU'RE GOING** to want to jump into this game and basically do a speed-run through it for the first few hours – just focus on clearing the 60 levels and do your best to purchase the 'Mexican Avenger' costume and the 'Master of Arms' artifact. This will help you smash through the game. Once you've completed the campaign (netting yourself 15 Bronze Trophies in the process), you can focus on clearing the bonus stages for half of the game's Silver rewards and then – if you really want to – you can play through the whole game again on a harder difficulty and to get the 'Grand Dragon' Trophy and claim that final Silver.



KICKBEAT

PLATFORM: PS3/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 5/5
TROPHIES: 15 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 6 🏆 9

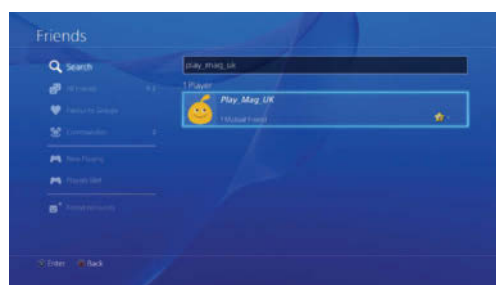
■ **RHYTHM GAMES ARE** never easy for Trophies. And neither are fighting games, right? So a rhythm-based fighting game was always going to be hellish. There's a simple solution to getting everything in this game, and that's basically to get really, *really* good at it. Start the story mode on Hard (throw yourself in at the deep end) and at least get the Bronze Trophies for that. Then bump it up to Expert, grab another Trophy, and start playing the *real* game on Master. Get used to how the game works without the prompts and this becomes a bit more realistic. But really, all this other stuff is just training you for Survival mode: surviving ten tracks in there will be the hardest Silver Trophy you're ever likely to unlock.

Get involved in the brand new Play PS4 community where you can join our game sessions, share screens and connect with other PlayStation fans!

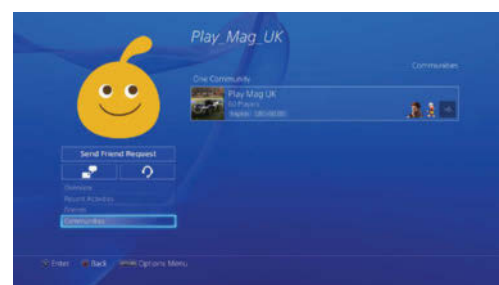
JOIN THE PLAY.

■ **THE PS4'S LATEST** update added the new Community feature and we've created our very own **Play** community for you to join! That means a message board for us all to chat and share awesome screenshots, and the ability to join parties and games set up by us and other members of the community.

The only problem with the new Community feature is that Sony hasn't yet added the ability to search for communities that you want to join, which makes it far harder to find them than it should be. Don't worry, though, we've got you covered. We've got an easy way for you to find and join us: just follow the steps below and you'll be with us in no time!



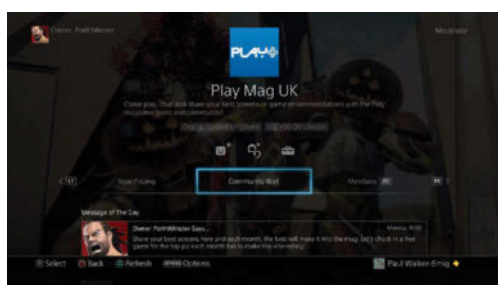
1 So, in light of the oversight, we've found a way to search for us anyway. Start up your PS4 and head over to your friends list. Highlight the Search option and search for 'Play_Mag_UK'.



2 Select our magazine profile – you can't miss it, it has a grinning character from *Loco Roco* as its picture – and navigate your way down to the 'communities' option.



COMMUNITY TODAY



3 You'll then see the Play Mag UK community. Select the community and hit X, you will be taken to the page. Then you just need to press X again to join us!

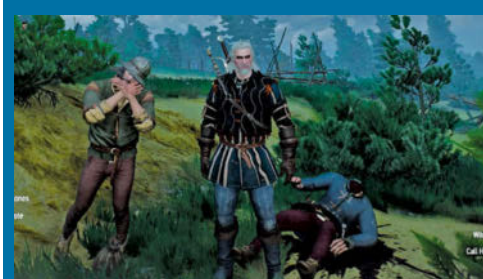


4 Once you're in, you can get sharing your best moments on the Community Wall, find other players to join games with you, and get involved in any game sessions we have set up.

YOUR BEST MOMENTS

WIN!

We'll be giving a free game to the best shot we've seen you lot share on our Community wall every month. Get sharing!

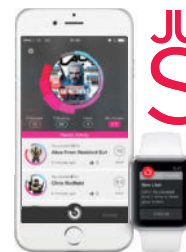


Congratulations to sickendogg666 who wins a free game for this brilliant shot captured when *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* started bugging out. We particularly like the guy on the left who looks like he's choking himself. Keep the great shots coming, people!



PLAY+ PLUS PlayList

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT A GAME SCORED THEN THESE PAGES ARE FOR YOU



JUST A
SCORE

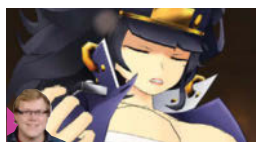
Follow PlayMag_UK today to see our latest scores

LET'S PLAY... VITA GAMES



LUKE ALBIGÉS SOUL SACRIFICE DELTA

9 While I still lament the lack of an actual *Monster Hunter* game on Vita, many of its clones are surprisingly good. *SSD* is the best of the bunch for me, but I'm a sucker for that sweet gothic art style.



LIAM WARR SENTRAN KAGURA: BON APPETIT!

8 Pro tip: Don't spend a two-hour journey on the train in Germany (while knocking back a few 'train beers') playing this Marvellous rhythm-action game sat next to an innocent German grandmother.



DREW SLEEP PERSONA 4 GOLDEN

10 I love everything about this game. It's perfect. The only downside was actually finishing it and remembering that the Investigation Team are videogame characters and not my actual friends...



PAUL WALKER-EMIG HOTLINE MIAMI

10 It's a testament to my love for *Hotline Miami* that it's the only game I've ever bothered to get the Platinum for. I maintain that it is one of the greatest action games of all time; it might even be my favourite.

PS4



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GAME

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
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THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly
squeezed among all your
old favourites

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Tearaway Unfolded	---
SOMA	---
Madden 16	---
Super Time Force Ultra	---

JUST A SCORE

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*denotes import review

TOP TEN DOGS



1 **DD MGSV: The Phantom Pain**



2 **PaRappa The Rapper**



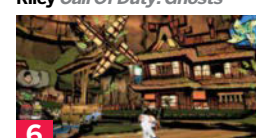
3 **Toby Sherlock Holmes series**



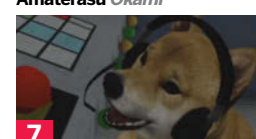
4 **Dogmeat Fallout 3**



5 **Riley Call Of Duty: Ghosts**



6 **Amaterasu Okami**



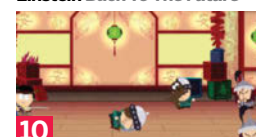
7 **Mira Silent Hill 2**



8 **Koromaru Persona series**



9 **Einstein Back To The Future**



10 **Sparky South Park: TSOT**

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



BRILLIANT GAMES

PLAY: THE LAST OF US REMASTERED

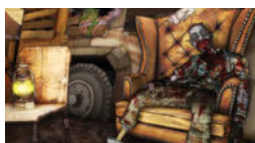
One of the best games on PS3 is unsurprisingly also one of the best games on PS4 in its remastered guise. If you haven't played it yet, what are you thinking? Get it done.



GETTING TECH

PLAY: DEVIL MAY CRY 4: SPECIAL EDITION

Speaking of remasters, the special edition of *Devil May Cry 4* is a great option for anyone who likes technical action games, spawned as the series is from the mind of Kamiya.



GRINDING

PLAY: BORDERLANDS 2

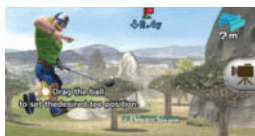
Full of varied weapons and items, *Borderlands 2* is a treasure for anyone who loves grinding for loot. If you're not that kind of person, it's still a fun co-op shooter.



CATCHING UP

PLAY: THE JAK AND DAXTER COLLECTION

If you missed out on the *Jak and Daxter* series, the collection that includes the three mainline games in the much-loved platforming series running at 60fps is perfect.



BIRDIES

PLAY: EVERYBODY'S GOLF

Who doesn't like *Everybody's Golf*? It's for everybody, after all. There is a new *Everybody's Golf* in development for PS4, but that's no reason not to play the brilliant Vita release.

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*denotes import review

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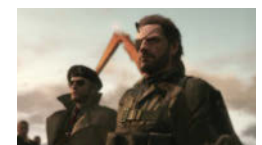
Watch out! Games!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Transformers Devastation
WHY (was it chosen?)
Because I have the touch

LUKE ALBIGES

I WAS GENUINELY concerned that *Devastation* – one of my most anticipated games of this year – would turn out awful like *Korra*, but it turns out that I needn't have worried at all. Platinum came good with a superb action game that displays an incredible level of love and respect for a franchise that defined my childhood and as I head into my fourth playthrough on the ludicrously tough Prime difficulty, I'm still finding new ways to be excited by the short-but-sweet campaign. Fun fact: the *Transformers: The Movie* soundtrack is on Spotify. You know what to do...



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
MGS V: The Phantom Pain
WHY (was it chosen?)
It's SO good

PAUL WALKER-EMIG

I LOVE THE MGS games, so it's no surprise that I'm having a brilliant time with *The Phantom Pain*. I could maybe do with a bit more of the characteristically bizarre and thematically heavy-handed storytelling that so many of MGS detractors hate, but the game itself is so good that I'm not going to complain too much about that. With DD or Quiet at my side and good equipment crafted courtesy of my team back at Mother Base, I'm progressing through smoothly and moving towards the game's end.



Imagine Publishing Ltd
Richmond House 33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth Dorset BH2 6EZ
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586200

Web: www.play-mag.co.uk
www.imagine-publishing.co.uk
www.greatdigitalmags.com

Magazine team

Editor Luke Albiges

luke.albiges@imagine-publishing.co.uk

☎ 01202 586269

Editor In Chief Ryan King

Designer Liam Warr

Production Editor Drew Sleep

Senior Staff Writer Paul Walker-Emig

Photographer James Sheppard

Senior Art Editor Andy Downes

Publishing Director Aaron Asadi

Head of Design Ross Andrews

Contributors

Jon Denton, Ian Dransfield, Ross Hamilton, Steve Holmes,
Darran Jones, Dom Peppiatt

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Advertising

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Head of Sales Hang Deretz

☎ 01202 586442

hang.deretz@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Account Manager Anthony Godsell

☎ 01202 586420

anthony.godsell@imagine-publishing.co.uk

International

Play is available for licensing. Contact the International
department to discuss partnership opportunities.

Head of International Licensing Cathy Blackman

☎ +44 (0) 1202 586401

licensing@imagine-publishing.co.uk

Subscriptions

play@servicehelpline.co.uk

☎ UK 0844 848 8404

☎ Overseas +44 1795 592 875

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Circulation

Head of Circulation Darren Pearce

☎ 01202 586200

Production

Production Director Jane Hawkins

☎ 01202 586200

Finance

Finance Director Marco Peroni

Founder

Group Managing Director Damian Butt

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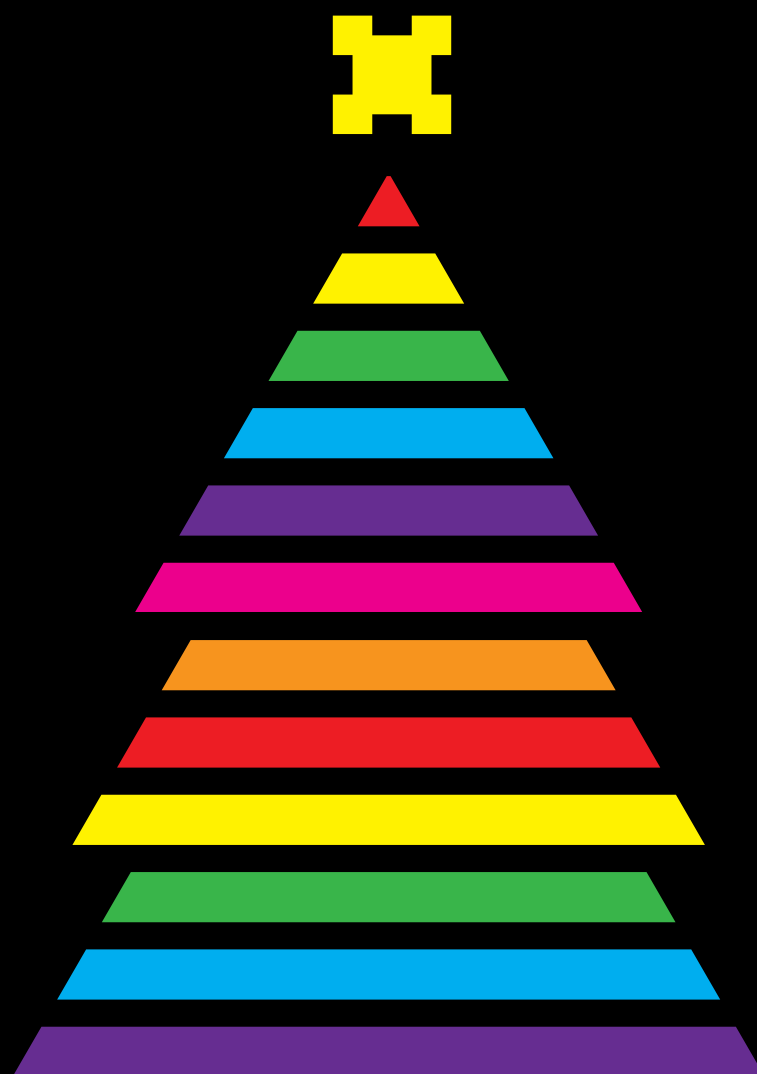
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